

A LITERARY MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

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TO MY WIFE
ELIZABETH MERRILL COOK
WHOSE INSPIRATION AND HELP
HAVE MADE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE

PREFACE

Only two questions need to be satisfactorily answered in order to insure for Middle English literature a much larger place in college courses than it has hitherto occupied. These two questions are: Is the literature of this period worth reading? and, Can it be read without a learned apparatus so formidable as to constitute a serious deterrent? The first question I have endeavored to answer in the Introduction; and to the second my affirmative reply is indicated in the whole method I have followed.

This book, then, has been framed, not in the interest of grammar, or of dialectical study, or of lexicography, but of literary enjoyment and profit. It has been made somewhat copious, that those who desire only easier selections may be able to avoid the harder, that it may be possible to examine certain species and ignore others, and yet that the more comprehensive student shall have before him a fairly full conspectus of the literature as a whole. If I have not failed in my attempt, the texts included ought not to be much harder to read than if they were Elizabethan, and those who read them will be acquainting themselves with an earlier and no less important age.

Authorities vary with respect to the limits of the Middle English period, the variation as to the beginning being between 1100 and 1200, and as to the end between 1400 and 1500. Some scholars, such as Sweet, call the language between 1100 and 1200 Transition Old English, and that between 1400 and 1500 Transition Middle English. In this book Middle English is assumed to cover 1100-1500. In two instances, works only to be found in manuscripts of later date than 1500 are assigned, on what seem to the editor sufficient grounds, to the fifteenth century.

The classification here observed is according to literary species, and not according to dialect or chronology. The species of literature are, however, not so clearly delimited in Middle English as in

some other tongues, notably in Greek, so that the classification of certain pieces must be regarded as only approximative.

No separate vocabulary has been provided, and no separate body of notes. On each page the reader will find, it is hoped, what is essential for a sufficient understanding of that page; if this has entailed a certain amount of repetition, or what to some minds may seem excess, in the defining of words, it must be borne in mind that he who is able to read while running is not obliged to pause. The general introduction has been made brief. The prefatory notes to the various selections are longer or shorter, according to circumstances. The list of helpful books will enable the student to extend his inquiries in a variety of directions.

The editor has used his own judgment with respect to punctuation and capitalization, has normalized *i* and *j*, *u* and *v*, capitalized the first personal pronoun, and substituted 'Jesu' for the ordinary 'Jhesu' — which is due to a misapprehension. In the constitution of certain texts he has emended somewhat freely, but has always endeavored to supply the means of restoring the manuscript readings or the text of an earlier editor; where there is reason to suppose that the latter faithfully represents the manuscript, it has been referred to in the footnotes as 'MS.'

An effort has been made to give due credit in each specific case of indebtedness; if there has been any failure in this respect, it is involuntary.

If this book succeeds in making the Middle Ages seem more attractive, more clearly related to modern times, or more profoundly suggestive, the editor will be satisfied. To him Middle English literature helps to make England, not less real, but more visionary, in the sense of Kipling's lines:

She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
Where you and I will fare.

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE LITERATURE

Mediæval European literature — at least if we except technical works and prose chronicles or histories — is characterized, in contrast with the ancient classics, by a certain expansiveness, resulting at times in an approach to garrulity. The author is not bent upon treating the matter in hand with the utmost economy, in order with the fewest possible strokes to achieve the finest proportions, the utmost simplicity, the most telling effect. The mediæval writer is more apt to be loose and desultory. At times he does not hesitate to be long-winded in description, discursive in the development of episodic reflection, tedious in the analysis of sentiment, or didactic in the enforcement of a moral. In all too few instances has he a sure sense of art — avoiding superfluity and digressions, and making straight for his goal. He employs repetition — for instance, in the refrain, or in the recurrent lines of the roundel; and, for the sake of rhyme, or to fill out a line, he will introduce conventional, almost meaningless, tags.

Vernacular writing in the Middle Ages was primarily addressed to the laity — to people who had not received the training of the schools, and who therefore were unaccustomed to strict sequences of thought, or to the measure and sobriety of perfect art. This may be clearly seen by the way in which translations are expanded — always excepting prose versions of the Bible and of some theological treatises. Chaucer,¹ in translating Boethius, uses three times as many words as the Latin verse, and more than twice as many as the Latin prose. The 38 words of Psalm 51. 1-3² in the Vulgate are converted by a late Middle English paraphrast into 194. Such translations, being less compact than the originals, made fewer demands

¹ See pp. 394-5.

² See pp. 402 ff.

upon the reader; he found them easier to follow, though his wits may have gone wandering before he reached the end.

Such absence of restraint may, according to circumstances, affect readers of to-day variously. Some things mediæval we may all find tedious, some things puerile; some things, on the other hand, simple, direct, and sweet—childlike, rather than childish. But take the pseudo-Mandeville,¹ for instance; is it easy to dismiss him with an epithet to which we should all assent? Is his book incredibly stupid—as much of it is certainly incredible—or is it always amusing? As easy to answer this, perhaps, as another question—is the compiler naïvely credulous, or is he an astute romancer? Perhaps neither the one nor the other, or rather both. Searching criticism reveals that some of his information rests on good authorities, and is true; other things are truth magnified and embellished by a purple mist; and still others are ancient poetry or fiction regarded as contemporary fact. His book is rambling, incoherent, uninformative, if you will; but to some minds it is charming. *Piers Plowman* leads us nowhither; but on the road we drop in at a tavern, and the low life of England under the senile Edward or the adolescent Richard is as plain before us as that of Holland in a picture by Teniers or Jan Steen, so that we look and listen in spite of ourselves.

All this is Gothic, both in the sense that we recognize, and in the which appealed to our ancestors of the eighteenth century. It lacks restraint; it is flamboyant; it sins by excess; it seems to emphasize the detail, and neglect the *ensemble*; its gargoyles grin, no less than its saints aspire; it comprehends legend, poetry, and record of fact—but who shall say where legend ends and fact begins? On the other hand, it is rich, and varied, and alive; not all the forms are noble or beautiful, but most are interesting; and there is often science of structure when least suspected, though sometimes instinctive, sometimes empirical, and sometimes insufficient, like that which left the tower of Beauvais a heap of ruined stones.

And as Gothic borrowed something from Byzantine art, so there are Oriental elements in mediæval literature—not only such as are derived from the Bible and the primitive liturgies, but those that

¹ See pp. 248 ff.

came in with pilgrim, merchant, and Crusader, visible more especially in tale and romance.

The Gothic cathedrals of the consummated Middle Ages succeeded, and in some sense grew out of, the earlier Romanesque, with its obvious, if somewhat oppressive, structure and solidity. The Romanesque church embodies the classic principles illustrated by the Roman arch and the Roman basilica, just as Augustine and Bede continue the Roman literary tradition. The latter have more moderation, more severity, than a Bonaventura or a Richard Rolle. The cathedral is more florid, more airy, more gorgeous with flaming color than the Romanesque church; but it is more crumbling, and tends more swiftly to decadence and overthrow. The simpler Gothic runs apace into the Flamboyant, and lo, before one can realize it, it has slid into the earlier Renaissance. So it is with literature; so it is with society. Beauty flowers for a moment out of strength; but pass by a few days later, and the blossom is faded, the glory departed.

Thus far, however, we have been disregarding certain works which appear even in the high mediæval period, but which differ notably from those that we have been attempting to characterize. They are works of measure and sobriety, like those of classic antiquity, rigorously planned; in them every line is structural, and you must read every line in order to be impressed by the magnitude, the logic, or the splendor of the whole. Of these the supreme type is the *Divine Comedy*. True, the *Divine Comedy* has been compared to a cathedral, not without reason; but the Gothic cathedral was never finished; many accretions to its original design might have fallen out otherwise; it did not represent a basic style, out of which others might in due course proceed; it was not, in the same sense as the Romanesque, grounded, massive, eternal. In all these respects Dante's poem might be compared to the earlier form. No one has been able to suggest an essential improvement in it; in itself, and through its outgrowths, it dominates all later European poetry of the chivalrous or 'romantic' temper. The lineaments of Beatrice swim before every ardent Christian lover, and Stephen Phillips can still write of Paolo and Francesca.

Why has Dante this power and this permanence? Partly because he was Dante—that is, a genius; but also because, by his own avowal, he placed himself under the tutelage of Virgil, and hence of Homer.

! In a measure, the same thing is true of Boccaccio. His long-winded romances have not endured; but the *Decameron*, written with classic restraint and finish, has not only survived, but is still a model of prose. If we meet with comparatively little of this sort in Middle English, it is because the Renaissance began to exert its power much earlier in Italy than in England, or even in France.

But if we may expect few well-rounded wholes in Middle English literature, we must recognize that the poetic faculty, released from the strenuous and incessant task of watching over the complete organism at every step, is the more free to abandon itself at any moment to the full tide of occasional sentiment—comic, pathetic, tender, or wistful. A piece otherwise marred by imperfections may thus have lovely or poignant bits, so irresistible as to suffuse a glow over the composition as a whole, and blind our eyes to the faults which readily disclose themselves to reflection. And since, speaking broadly, the demands that we may make upon Middle English literature are restricted by considerations of form, it is with peculiar satisfaction that we now and then come upon a complete piece, as in Chaucer at his best, that endures the most searching trials, and yields unalloyed pleasure at every reperusal. But such encounters in Chaucer cause a deeper regret that so large a part of his writing is fragmentary, that his assignment of the several Canterbury tales to the personages of the pilgrimage is not always convincing, and that his greatest work, when viewed in the light of his own avowed plan, remains a torso.

To begin, and never to end, or to end only by stopping when fatigue or caprice dictates; to project what can never be compassed, or what is amorphous in its very conception; to reveal beauty only in glimpses, anon to be swallowed in convention or dulness—this it is to belong to the typical Middle Age, oppressed and glorified by its sense of the infinite, and seeing visions of starry brightness projected against a background of violence and fraud, of triumphant injustice

and unbearable oppression. The Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, typify in the world of action some of the literary and architectural phenomena that we have been attempting to describe — doomed to be abortive from their very nature, uninspired in many, perhaps most, of their particulars, but illumined by flashes of heroism and of generous sentiment, too fine to be steadily realized in the even course of a workaday world. In this respect the classic ideal, both of life and art, is more compassable, because more modest. Horace accomplishes what he undertakes more evenly, more uniformly, than Chaucer — yet shall I hesitate to say that some of us prefer Chaucer?

Whatever we may deny to our Middle English authors, in certain respects they are unrivaled. The wistfulness of regret for vanished glories, the sympathy with an outcast and bereaved wife, the mirthful interest in the mimic manhood of the barnyard, the joyous participation in the young life of the Maytime, the swift change by which the clowns and thieves of a Yorkshire moorside are transported to the Judean plains and the presence of the Divine Child in his sweet and touching innocence — these things have a perennial savor, a persistent appeal, even as the sorrows of Lear, the maiden grace of Miranda, the humors of Falstaff, or the pitcous pleadings of Desdemona.

II. THE LANGUAGE

LETTERS

The letters are the same as in modern English (but see below with the addition of \mathfrak{z} (\mathfrak{Z}), \mathfrak{p} (\mathfrak{p}), and \mathfrak{v} (\mathfrak{V}). \mathfrak{Z} (from an old manuscript-form of *g*) is used for modern English *gh* (often before *t*) and for *y* (at the beginning or end of a syllable). \mathfrak{p} (*thorn*) and \mathfrak{v} (*eth*, as in *weather*) represent *th*, and are used interchangeably with *th* and each other.

\mathfrak{J} is represented in the manuscripts by *i*, and *v* by *u*; so that, strictly speaking, *j* and *v* should be subtracted from the total number of letters. \mathfrak{Y} is very frequently used for *i*, and the two are virtually interchangeable as vowels.

PRONUNCIATION

There are two possible ways of pronouncing Middle English — one for quick understanding, the other for beauty. According to the first, one reads the text like so much modern English, at the same time converting the words, wherever possible, into their modern English forms. This answers sufficiently well in the case of prose, or of poetry written without much regard to metrical principles; but it should always be regarded as a makeshift, and, in the strict sense, as unscholarly. Perhaps the aptest apology for it would be found in our reading Shakespeare as modern English, in spite of the fact that Shakespeare himself our modern pronunciation would, to a large degree, have seemed unintelligible or barbarous.

The second mode of pronunciation, essential to the just rendering of artistic verse, takes account of two things — strict metre, and the quite different values of certain letters, especially the vowels, from those of modern English. By attending to these, much Middle English poetry may be made beautiful to the ear which otherwise

THE LANGUAGE

would sound commonplace or uncouth; and this result is worth the trouble involved.

The recognition of metrical technique in Middle English depends chiefly upon the pronunciation of final *-e* (besides *-es*, etc., in stressed positions). As a rule, final *-e* is always to be regarded as forming a separate syllable; but before vowels, the commonest way of beginning with *h*, and occasionally elsewhere, it is silent. The simplest rule is this: In verse, always pronounce final *-e* (*-es*, etc.) where it will conduce to the melody of the line, but suppress it in the comparatively rare instances where it does not. Such *-e*'s are always to be pronounced like the *a* in *era* or *vista*. The *-e* of *-el*, *-en*, *-er* is also to be suppressed when metre so requires. Besides the final unstressed *-e*, there is also a *stressed -e*—often represented by *-y* in modern English; thus, cite (i.e. *cité*), *city*.

VOWELS

Short vowels are pronounced about as in modern English, but a nearly as *ah* (never like *a* in *hat*); *o* always rounded (produced with rounded lips; about like *aw*, but shorter), and never pronounced like *a* in modern *ah*; *u* as in *pull*, not as in *dull*. From the normal *o* is to be distinguished an *o* which is equivalent to *u*, and originally was *u*; it can be known by its always corresponding to the modern English *o* or *u* pronounced as *u* in *sun*: e.g. Middle English *sonne*, *sone*, *love*, etc. (OE. *sunne*, *sunu*, *lufu*, etc.), modern English *sun*, *son*, *love*, etc.

Long vowels are never pronounced as in modern English, but as in the European pronunciation of Latin, or approximately as in Italian, French, or German, thus:

a as in *father*

e (ee) close as in *they*

e (ee) open as in *there*

i as in *pique*

o close as in *blow*

o open as in *broad*

u as in *rule*

Close and open *e* can only be discriminated by the student of Old English; close *o* is *oo* in modern English, open *o* being *o*, *oa*, etc. The double vowels, *ee* and *oo*, merely indicate long *e* and *o*, and are never to be pronounced as in modern English.

INTRODUCTION

DIPHTHONGS

The diphthongs *ei* and *ui* are to be pronounced like the first element followed by the second, and with the first element stressed. The remaining diphthongs are thus pronounced:

ai as in *aisle*

au (aw) as in *house* (Ger. *Haus*)

eu (ew) as in *few*

iu (iw) as in *few*

oi as in *boil*

ou (ow) as in *boor*, when *now* pronounced as in *out*, *cow*

ou (ow) as *ō + u* (nearly as *ō*), in all cases but the preceding

CONSONANTS

c pronounced as *k* or *s*, under the same circumstances as in modern English; *ci* not = *sh*, but = *si* (modern Eng. *see*)

ch as in modern English, except before *t*, when it was pronounced like the *ch* in Ger. *ich* after *e*, *i*, or *y*, and like *ch* in Ger. *auch* after the other vowels

g as in *gold*, except occasionally as in *gem*; *ght* like *cht* (see above)

ɣ initial = *y*; *ɣt* like *cht*

h final sometimes like the *ch* of *cht*: *sih*, *purh*

ht like *cht*

kn never like *n*, but = *k + n*

s like *z* between vowels, as in modern English

sch like *sh*

si not = *sh*, but = modern Eng. *see*

p, *ɸ* like *th* (both sounds) in modern English

tu not = *chu*: *na-tu-re*

Double consonants before a vowel are always pronounced twice: *renne* = *ren + ne*; *thridde* = *thrid + de*

INFLECTION

NOUNS

The genitive singular and the plural regularly end in -(e)s (occasionally -is, -us; -(e)z); the dative in -e, or without ending. To such irregular plurals (identical with the singular) as occur in the Modern English *sheep*, *swine*, etc., add *hors*. Certain original feminines like *lady*, *halle*, *sonne*, sometimes retain the nominative form in the genitive singular; to these add the nouns of relationship, *fader*, *brother*, *moder*, etc., which, however, sometimes have -s. A few nouns of the Old English weak declension end in -n in the plural, like *been*, *bees*; *yen*, *eyes* (modern poetic *eyne*); *schoon*, *shoes* (modern poetic *shoon*), and are occasionally followed by others which more normally would end in -s (see, for example, *Layamon*).

ADJECTIVES

The plural and the dative singular of adjectives ending in a consonant are often formed by the addition of -e. When the adjective is preceded by the definite article, a demonstrative, or a possessive, -e is sometimes appended: *the grete honour*; *his white baner*.

PRONOUNS

The only forms which are not fairly self-explanatory are those of the feminine personal pronoun. The typical paradigm follows:

SING. *N.* h(e)o; s(c)ho, s(c)he

G. } hir(e), hur(e), her(e)
D. }

A. hi(e), hir(e), hur(e), her(e)

PLUR. *N.* h(i)e; thei, thai

G. her(e), h(e)or(e); their(e)

D. } he(o)m, hi(o)m; the(i)m, tha(i)m
A. }

The plurals of the personal pronouns of all genders are identical with those of the feminine. The genitive and dative singular of *hit*, *it*, are the same as those of the masculine: *his*, *him*.

Of the second person, *ye* is nominative; *you*, *yow*, dative and accusative.

Tho and *thos(e)* are independent demonstratives, each meaning *those*.

VERBS

The normal endings of the verb (disregarding the subjunctive) are:

IND. PRES. SING.	1. -e
	2. -est
	3. -eth
PLUR.	-e(n)

WEAK VERBS		STRONG VERBS
IND. PRET. SING.	1. 3. -(e)de, -te	—
	2. -(e)dest, -test	-e, —
PLUR.	-(e)de(n), -te(n)	-e(n)
IMPER. SING.	-e, —	
PLUR.	-e, -eth, —	
INFIN.	-e(n), —; occasionally, -in, -yn	
PRES. PART.	-ing(e); -inde (-ende, -and)	
PAST PART.	-(e)d, -t (of weak verbs); -e(n), -n (of strong verbs)	

The ind. pres. 3 sing. of a stem ending in -t or -d is often condensed to -t: thus, *sit* = *sitt*h (for modern *sitteth*).

The following are the more important irregular verbs.

Conjugation of *be(n)*, *beo(n)*, *be*.

INDICATIVE		SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. <i>be(o)</i> ; <i>am</i> , <i>æm</i> ; neg. <i>nam</i>	1. 2. 3. <i>b(e)o</i> , <i>be</i> , <i>bi</i>
	2. <i>be(e)st</i> ; Northern <i>es</i> , <i>is</i> , <i>bese</i> ; <i>art</i> , <i>ert</i> ; with pers. pron. <i>artu</i> , <i>artow</i> ; neg. <i>nart</i>	
	3. <i>beth</i> , <i>beo(th)</i> ; <i>is</i> , <i>ys</i> ; Northern <i>bes(e)</i> , <i>es</i> ; neg. <i>nis</i> , <i>nys</i>	
PLUR.	<i>beo(th)</i> , <i>be(e)th</i> , <i>be(o)n</i> , <i>be(ne)</i> ; Northern <i>es</i> , <i>is</i> ; <i>synd(en)</i> ; <i>ar(e)n</i> , <i>ern</i> , <i>are</i> , <i>ere</i>	<i>be(n)</i>

PRET. SING.	1. 3. was, watz; neg. nas		wer(e), war(e)
	2. were		were
PLUR.	were(n), ware(n)		were(n)
IMPER. SING.	be(o)	INFIN.	be(n), bene, beon
PLUR.	be(o)th		
PRES. PART.	beende, being(e)	PAST PART.	(i)be(o)n, (i)be(o), bene

Conjugation of *habben, have(n), have.*

	INDICATIVE	SUBJUNCTIVE
PRES. SING.	1. (h)abbe, have	1. 2. 3. (h)abbe, have
	2. hafest, ha(ve)st; Northern havis, has(e), hatz; with pers. pron. hastow	
	3. habbeth, haveth, hath; Northern havis, has	
	PLUR. habbeth, haveth, have, han; Northern havis, has(e)	have(n)
PRET. SING.	1. 3. hafede, haved(e), hædde, had(d)e	1. 2. 3. [Like Ind. 1 and 3]
	2. hevedest, haddist; Northern hade	
PLUR.	hæfden, hadde(n), haveden	[Like Ind.]
IMPER. SING.	ha(f)e, have	INFIN. habben, haven, han
PLUR.	habbeth, haveth	
PRES. PART.	hæbbende, hafand, having(e)	PAST PART. (i)haved, (i)hafd, (i)had

Conjugation of *go(n), ga(n), go.*

IND. PRES. SING. 1. go, ga; 2. gost, gast, gest; 3. goth, gath; Northern gæth, gæs; PLUR. goth, gath, go(n), ga(n). PRET. eode, ȝeode, yede, yode, wente. PAST PART. (i)gan, (i)go(n), went.

Conjugation of *cunne(n), conne(n), know, be able.*

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. can(n), con(n); 2. canst, const; PLUR. cunne(n), conne(n), cunneth. PRET. c(o)uthe, cowthe, coude. PAST PART. c(o)uth.

Conjugation of —, *may, must*.

PRES. SING. 1. 3. *mot*; 2. *most(e)*; PLUR. *mote(n)*. PRET. SING.
1. 3. *most(e)*; 2. *mostes(t)*; PLUR. *moste(n)*.

(By the early fifteenth century, at latest, the preterit forms were also used as present.)

Conjugation of *mugen, mowe(n), be able, be permitted*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. *mai(s), mey, may(e)*; 2. *miht, maist*;
PLUR. *mage(n), mawen, muge, muwe(n), mow, mowe(n)*. PRET.
SING. 1. 3. *mihte, mo(u)ht(e), myst*; 2. *mihtes(t)*; PLUR.
mihte(n).

Conjugation of —, *shall*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. *s(h)al(l), schal(l)*; 2. *s(c)halt*; Northern
sall; with personal pronoun *shaltow*; PLUR. *s(c)hul(l)(en),*
sholen. PRET. *s(c)holde, s(c)hulde*; PLUR. *s(c)holden, s(c)hulden*.

Conjugation of *willen, will*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. *wol(e), wulle, wil(l)(e)*; 2. *wolt, wilt,*
wil(l); with personal pronoun *woltow, wiltu*; PLUR. *wol(le)n,*
wol(e), wile(n). PRET. *wolde*; PLUR. *wolde(n)*. PAST PART.
wold.

Conjugation of *wite(n), know*.

IND. PRES. SING. 1. 3. *wo(o)t*; neg. *not*; 2. *wo(o)st*; with per-
sonal pronoun *wostow*; PLUR. *witen*. PRET. *wiste*; PLUR.
wisten. PAST PART. *wist*.

PREPOSITIONS

Of is sometimes contracted to o, as in modern Eng. *o'clock*, and on
to a, as in *aboard* = *on board*.

The Northern *til* is equivalent to *to*.

Th is assimilated to t in *atte* = *at the*.

DIALECTS

The dialects are Northern, Midland, and Southern, the first of these including also the language of the Scottish Lowlands. The most important dialect with reference to modern English is the East Midland, in whose district lay the two universities, and eventually London. Examples of the various dialects in this book are: Northern: Barbour, *The Bruce* (pp. 238 ff.); Southern: Layamon, *Brut* (pp. 219 ff.); Midland: *The Bestiary* (pp. 316 ff.).

Initial *v* for *f*, and *z* for *s*, are marks of the Southern dialect.

One of the commoner marks of the Northern dialect is *a* for *o* in words like *bald*, *bold*; *gast*, *ghost*; *wa*, *woe*. Others are: initial *s* for *sh*; *k* for *ch* (*kirk*, *church*). The Northern dialect has also a greater tendency to rid itself of inflectional endings and of final unstressed *-e*, has the present participle in *-and(e)* (Midland and Southern *-inde*, *-ende*, *-inge*), and to some extent has a peculiar vocabulary.

For fuller information about the dialects, see Emerson, *Middle English Reader*, 2d ed., New York, 1915, and Skeat, *English Dialects*, Cambridge (Eng.), 1911.

III. SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THE STUDY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

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- SCHIOFIELD, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*. New York, 1906.
- TEN BRINK, *Early English Literature (to Wyclif)*. New York, 1889.
- , *History of English Literature (Wyclif, Chaucer, Earliest Drama, Renaissance)*. New York, 1893.
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- See also Wells, under Bibliographies.

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- HAMMOND, *Chaucer: a Bibliographical Manual*. New York, 1908.
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- BATES, *The English Religious Drama*. New York and London, 1893.
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- TODDARD, *References for Students of Miracle Plays and Mysteries*. Berkeley (California), 1887.

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- MORSBACH, *Mittellenglische Grammatik*, Vol. 1. Halle, 1896.
- See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

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- KALUZA, *Short History of English Versification*. London and New York, 1911.
- SCHIPPER, *History of English Versification*. Oxford, 1910.
- See also Ten Brink, under Chaucer.

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- ÄTZNER, *Altenglische Sprachproben: Wörterbuch: A—Misbilleven*. Berlin, 1878-1900.
- MURRAY, *New English Dictionary: A—Unforeseeable, V—Wash, X—end*. Oxford, 1888-1921.

KINDRED LITERATURES

- ARDES, *Summary of the Literatures of Modern Europe*. London, 1907.
- ARY-OELSNER, *History of Early Italian Literature to the Death of Dante*. London, 1901.

- GRÖBER, *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*. Strassburg, 1888-1902.
 JEANROY, *Les Origines de la Poésie Lyrique en France au Moyen Age*.
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- ADAMS, *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*. Boston, 1913.
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This virtually supersedes all the following. In addition to the bibliography, this work gives for each item its date, dialect, manuscripts, sources, etc., with abstracts of all the longer pieces.

- BILLINGS, *Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances dealing with
 English and Germanic Legends, and with the Cycles of Charlemagne
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 KÖRTING, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Englischen Literatur*. 5th ed.
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 See also Edwardes, under Kindred Literatures; Hammond, under Chau-
 cer; and Stoddard, under Miracle Plays.

MIDDLE ENGLISH READER

ROMANCES

MALORY, MORTE DARTHUR

Sir Thomas Malory, knight, completed his romance, according to his own statement, between March 4, 1469 and March 3, 1470 (the ninth year of Edward IV). His home was at Newbold Revel, near Coventry, and five and a half miles northwest of Rugby, where he succeeded his father in 1433 or 1434. He was member of Parliament for Warwickshire in 1445, and died March 14, 1470 (according to Kittredge, *Harvard Studies* 5, 88 ff.). His book is mostly derived from a variety of French sources, though he occasionally adapts English poems. Whether the ultimate French originals had been digested into a single work which served as Malory's source has not been determined. The *Morte Darthur* was published by Caxton in 1485, and it is from Sommer's literal reprint that our text is derived.

For the characterization of this romance we may borrow a few sentences from Andrew Lang (*Le Morte Darthur*, ed. Sommer, pp. xiv-xxi): 'There is no more strange fortune in literature than that which blended wild Celtic myths, and a monastic theory of the saintly life, with all of chivalrous adventure, with all of courtesy and gentleness that the Middle Ages could conceive, and handed it on to be the delight of the changing ages. . . . Malory has penned the great and chief romance of his own age and of ours, the story that must endure and must move the *lacryma rerum* till man's nature is altered again. . . . The Celtic legends, passed through the French mind, and rendered in Malory's English, have, what Homer lacks, the charm of mystery and distance, the background of the unknown. . . . Malory's book is a very complete and composite picture of a strangely inherited ideal; it is, indeed, "a jumble," but, of all jumbles, the most poetic and the most pathetic. . . . Malory is skilled "to teach men unto strange adventures," to instruct in all courage, chastity, endurance, and true love, nor can we estimate what his influence must have been in training the fathers of Elizabeth's Englishmen. . . . The style of Malory is, of course, based on the fresh and simple manner of his French originals. For an English style of his age, it is particularly fluent. . . . Perhaps it is just because he does follow a French copy, and so is familiar with words derived from the Latin, that Malory possesses his fluency and facility. . . . The manner and matter of Malory make him the most generally known of all old authors, except, of course, the translators of the Bible.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Book 18, chaps. 18-20. Based upon the French prose romance of *Lancelot* (first half of the thirteenth century), and the fourteenth-century *Morte Arthur* contained in Harleian MS. 2252 of the British Museum (edited by Bruce for the E. E. T. S.; see also Hemingway's edition, Boston, 1912); but chapter 20 is almost wholly due to Malory. For details concerning the relation of our passage to the French *Lancelot*, see Sommer 3. 10, 222-8, 250 for the text of the OF. original, see *Mort Artu*, ed. Bruce, pp. 74 ff. For the general subject of Lancelot, see Jessie L. Weston's *The Legend of Lancelot du Lac* (London, 1901).

Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* and *Lancelot and Elaine* are founded on Malory

And so upon a morne they took their horses, and Elayne le Blank with them; and whan they came to Astolat, there were they wel lodged, and had grete chere of Syre Bernard the old baron, and of Sir Tyrre his sone. And so upon the morne, whan Syr Launcelot shold¹ departe, fayre Elayne brougt her fader with her, and Sir Lavayne and Sir Tyrre, and thus she said: 'My lord Syr Launcelot now I see ye wylle departe, now, fayre knyghte and curtois knyghte have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to dye for thy love.' 'Wha wold ye that I dyd?' said Syr Launcelot. 'I wold have you to my husbond,' sayd Elayne. 'Fair damoyssel, I thanke yow,' sayd Syr Launcelot, 'but truly,' sayd he, 'I cast² me never to be wedded man.' 'Thenne, fair knyght,' said she, 'wylle ye be my peramour?' 'Jesu defende me,' said Syr Launcelot, 'for thenne I rewarded your fader and your broder ful evylle for their grete goodenes' 'Allas,' sayd she, 'thenne must I dye for your love.' 'Ye shal not so,' said Syre Launcelot, 'for wete³ ye wel, fayr mayden, I myght have ben maryed and⁴ I had wolde,⁵ but I never applyed me to be maryed yet. But by cause,⁶ fair damoyssel, that ye love me as ye saye ye doo, I wille, for your good wylle and kyndenes, shewe you somme goodenes, and that is this: that wh[er]esomever ye will beset⁷ youre herte upon somme goode knyghte that wylle wedd yow, I shalle gyve yow togyders⁸ a thousand pound yerely, to you

¹ was to, was about to

² intend (*NED.* 44. b)

³ paramour, illicit lover

⁴ should reward (subj.)

⁵ wit, know

⁶ if

⁷ willed, wished

⁸ because

⁹ set, place

¹⁰ together

and to your heyres. Thus moche will I gyve yow, faire madame, for your kyndenes, and alweyes whyle I lyve to be your owne knyghte.' 'Of alle this,' saide the mayden, 'I wille none, for, but-yf¹ ye wille wedde me, or ellys be my peramour at the leest, wete yow wel, Sir Launcelot, my good dayes are done.' 'Fair damoyssel,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'of these two thynges ye must pardonne me.' Thenne she shryked² shrilly,³ and felle doune in a swoune; and thenne wymmen bare her into her chamber, and there she made overmoche sorowe. And thenne Sir Launcelot wold departe; and there he asked Sir Lavayn what he wold doo. 'What shold I doo,' said Syre Lavayne, 'but folowe yow, but-yf ye dryve me from yow, or commaunde me to goo from yow?' . . .

Thenne Sir Launcelot took his leve, and soo they departed, and came unto Wynchestre. And whan Arthur wyste⁴ that Syr Launcelot was come, hole⁵ and sound, the kyng maade grete joye of hym, and soo dyd Sir Gawayn, and all the knyghtes of the Round Table excepte Sir Agravayn and Sire Mordred. Also Quene Guenever was woode⁶ wrothe with Sir Launcelot, and wold by no meanes speke with hym, but enstraunged⁷ herself from hym, and Sir Launcelot made alle the meanes that he myght for to speke with the quene, but hit wolde not be.

Now speke we of the fayre mayden of Astolat, that made suche sorowe daye and nyght that she never slepte, etc, nor drank; and ever she made her complaynt unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten dayes, that she febled so⁸ that she must nedes passe out of thys world, thenne she shryved⁹ her clene, and receyved her Creatoure.¹⁰ And ever she complayned styлле upon Sire Launcelot. Thenne her ghostly¹¹ fader bad her leve suche thoughtes. Thenne she sayd: 'Why shold I leve suche thoughtes? Am I not an erthely woman? And alle the whyle the brethe is in my body I may complayne me, for my byleve is I doo none offence though I love an erthely man, and I take God to my record I loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a clene mayden I am for

¹ unless² shrieked³ shrilly⁴ knew⁵ This is direct from OE. *hāl*⁶ mad(ly)⁷ estranged⁸ grew so weak⁹ confessed and received absolution¹⁰ the sacrament¹¹ spiritual

hym and for alle other. And sythen¹ hit is the sufferaunce² of God that I shalle dye for the love of soo noble a knyghte, I byseche the hyghe Fader of heven to have mercy upon my sowle, and [that] myn innumerable paynes that I suffred may be allygeaunce³ of parte of my synnes. For swete Lord Jesu,' sayd the fayre mayden, 'I take the to record, on the⁴ I was never grete offenser ageynst thy lawes, but that I loved this noble knyght Sire Launcelot out of mesure, and of myself, good Lord, I myght not withstande the fervent love wherfor⁵ I have my dethe.' And thenne she called her fader Sire Bernard, and her broder Sir Tyrre, and hertely she praid her fader that her broder myght wryte a letter lyke as she did endyte hit; and so her fader graunted her. And whan the letter was wryten word by word lyke as she devysed, thenne she prayd her fader that she myght be watched untill she were dede. 'And whyle my body is hote,⁶ lete this letter be putt in my ryght hand, and my hande bounde fast with the letter untill that I be cold, and lete me be putte in a fayre bedde, with alle the rychest clothes that I have aboute me, and so lete my bedde and alle my rychest clothes be laide with me in a charyot unto the next place where Temse⁷ is, and there lete me be putte within a barget,⁸ and but one man with me, suche as ye trust to sterve me thyder, and that my barget be covered with blak samyte,⁹ over and over. Thus, fader, I byseche yow, lete hit be done.' Soo her fader graunted hit her feythfully, alle thyng shold be done lyke as she had devysed. Thenne her fader and her broder made grete dole,¹⁰ for when this was done, anone¹¹ she dyed. And soo whan she was dede, the corps, and the bedde, alle was ledde the next way unto Temse, and there a man, and the corps, and alle, were put into Temse, and soo the man styred¹² the barget unto Westmynster, and there he rowed a grete whyle to and fro or¹³ ony aspyed hit.

Soo by fortune Kynge Arthur and the Quene Guenever were spekyng togidres at a wyndowe; and soo as they loked into Temse, they aspyed this blak barget, and hadde mervyllle what it mente. Thenne

¹ since (<sithens, sithence)

² permission

³ alleviation

⁴ toward thee

⁵ because of which

⁶ hot, warm

⁷ Thames

⁸ barge

⁹ samite, rich silk

¹⁰ lamentation

¹¹ immediately (in one, i.e. minute)

¹² steered

¹³ ere, before

he kynge called Sire Kay, and shewed hit hym. 'Sir,' said Sir Kay, 'wete you wel there is some newe tydynge.' 'Goo thyder,' sayd the kynge to Sir Kay, 'and take with you Sire Brandyles and Agravayne, and brynge me redy word what is there.' Thenne these four knyghtes departed, and came to the barget, and wente in; and there they fond the fayrest corps lyenge in a ryche bedde, and a poure man sitting in the bargets ende, and no word wold he speke. Soo these four knyghtes retorned unto the kyng agayne, and told hym what they fond. 'That fayr corps wylle I see,' sayd the kyng. And soo thenne the kyng took the quene by the hand, and went thydder. Thenne the kynge made the barget to be holden fast; and thenne the kyng and the quene entred, with certayn knyghtes wyth them. And there he sawe the fayrest woman lye in a ryche bedde, coverd unto her myddel with many ryche clothes, and alle was of clothe of gold, and she lay as though she had smyled. Thenne the quene aspyed a letter in her yght hand, and told it to the kyng. Thenne the kyng took it, and sayd: 'Now am I sure this letter wille telle what she was, and why she is come hydder.' Soo thenne the kyng and the quene wente oute of the barget, and soo commaunded a certayne¹ wayte upon the barget. And soo whan the kyng was come within his chamber, he called many knyghtes aboute hym, and saide that he wold wete openly what was wryten within that letter. Thenne the kyng brake it, and made a clerke² to rede hit; and this was the entente³ of the letter: 'Moost noble knyghte, Sir Launcelot, now hath dethe made us two it debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fayre nayden of Astolat; therfor unto alle ladyes I make my mone; yet praye for my soule, and bery me atte leest, and offre ye my masse-peny.⁴ This is my last request. And a clene mayden I dyed, I take God to wytnes. Pray for my soule, Sir Launcelot, as thou art pierles.⁵' This was alle the substance in the letter. And whan it was redde, the kyng, the quene, and alle the knyghtes wepte for pyte of the doleful complayntes. Thenne was Sire Launcelot sente for. And whan he was come, Kyng Arthur made the letter to be redde to hym; and whanne Sire Launcelot herd hit word by word, he sayd: 'My lord

¹ certain person (or persons)

³ meaning, substance
⁴ funeral dues

⁵ peerless

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Arthur, wete ye wel I am ryghte hevvy¹ of the dethe of this fair damoyssel. God knoweth I was never causer of her dethe by my wyllynge, and that wille I reporte me² to her own broder; here he is, Sir Lavayne. I wille not saye nay,' sayd Syre Launcelot, 'but that
 5 she was bothe fayre and good, and moche I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of mesure.' 'Ye myght have shewed her,' sayd the quene, 'somme bounte and gentilnes, that myghte have preserved her lyf.' 'Madame,' sayd Sir Launcelot, 'she wold none other waye: be ansuerd, but that she wold be my wyf, outh³ els my peramour
 10 and of these two I wold not graunte her; but I proferd her, for he good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yerly to her and to her heyres, and to⁴ wedde ony manere knyghte⁵ that she coude fynd best to love in her herte. For, madame,' said Sir Launcelot, 'I lov not to be constrayned to love; for love muste aryse of the herte, and
 15 not by no constraynte.' 'That is trouth,' sayd the kyng, and many knyghtes; 'love is free in hymselfe, and never wille be bounden, for where he is bounden he looseth hymself.' Thenne sayd the kyng unto Sire Launcelot: 'Hit wyl be your worshyp⁶ that ye oversee that she be entered⁷ worshypfully.' 'Sire,' sayd Sire Launcelot, 'tha
 20 shalle be done as I can best devyse.' And soo many knyghtes yede thyder to behold that fayr mayden. And soo upon the morne she was entered rychely, and Sir Launcelot offryd her masse-peny, and all the knyghtes of the Table Round that were there at that tyme offry with Syr Launcelot. And thenne the povre man wente ageyne wit
 25 the barget. Thenne the quene sente for Syr Launcelot, and pray hym of mercy,¹⁰ for why¹¹ that she had ben wrothe with hym causeles 'This is not the fyrste tyme,' said Sir Launcelot, 'that ye have be displeasyd with me causeles; but, madame, ever I must suffre you but what sorowe I endure I take no force.'¹²

¹ sorrowful

² refer (by way of appeal)

³ or

⁴ that she might

⁵ of knight (for an explanation see *NED*. s.v. *kin*, 6.b)

⁶ to your credit

⁷ provide

⁸ interred

⁹ went

¹⁰ besought his pardon

¹¹ because

¹² I do not mind

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and unto Gouvernaile, a drynke, and charged them that what day Kyng
 Marke shold wedde, that same daye they shold gyve hym that drynke;
 soo that Kyng Marke shold drynke to La Beale Isoud; 'and thenne,'
 said the quene, 'I undertake eyther shalle love other the dayes of
 5 their lyf.' Soo this drynke was yeven unto Dame Bragwayne and
 unto Gouvernaile. And thenne anone Syre Trystram tooke the see
 and La Beale Isoud; and whan they were in theire caban, hit happed
 soo that they were thursty, and they sawe a lytyl flacke[t]¹ of gold
 stande by them, and hit semed by the coloure and the taste that it
 10 was noble wyn. Thenne Sire Trystram toke the flacke[t] in his hand,
 and sayd: 'Madame Isoud, here is the best drynke that ever ye drank,
 that Dame Bragwayne youre mayden, and Governayle my servaunt,
 have kepte for themself.' Thenne they lough and made good chere,
 and eyther dranke to other frely, and they thoughte never drynke
 15 that ever they dranke to other was soo swete nor soo good. But by
 that² they drynke was in their bodyes, they loved eyther other so
 wel that never they love departed, for wele neyther³ for wo. And
 thus it happed the love fyrste betwixe Sire Tristram and La Beale
 Isoud, the whiche love never departed the dayes of their lyf.

THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL: THE VOW

Book 13, chaps. 6-7. This comes from *La Queste del Saint Graal* (edited by
 Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club, London, 1864); see Sommer 3. 206, 209, 210.

With the second and third paragraphs of this extract may be compared
 Tennyson, *Holy Grail* 182 ff., 314 ff.

20 'Now,' sayd the kyng, 'I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreal
 shalle alle ye of the Table Rounde departe, and never shalle I see yow
 ageyne hole togyders; therfor I wille see yow alle hole togyders in
 the medowe of Camelot, to juste and to torneie, that after your dethe
 men maye speke of hit, that suche good knyghtes were holy⁴ togyders
 25 suche a day.' As unto that counceyll, and at the kynges request, they
 accorded alle, and toke on their harneis⁵ that longed⁶ unto justynge.

¹ flask

² by the time

³ nor

⁴ wholly

⁵ armor

⁶ belonged

But alle this merynge¹ of the kyng was for this entent, for to see Galahalt proved,² for the kyng demed³ he shold not lightly⁴ come agayne unto the courte after his departynge. So were they assembled in the medowe, bothe more and lesse.⁵ Thenne Syr Galahalt, by the prayer of the kyng and the quene, dyd upon hym a noble jesseraunce, and also he dyd on⁶ his helme, but shelde wold he take none for no prayer of the kyng. And thenne Sir Gawayne and other knyghtes paid hym to take a spere. Ryghte soo he dyd; and the quene was in a toure with alle her ladyes for to behold that turnement. Thenne Sir Galahalt dressid hym⁷ in myddes⁸ of the medowe, and began to breke speres merveyllously, that all men had wonder of hym, for he there surmounted⁹ alle other knyghtes, for within a whyle he had defouled¹⁰ many good knyghtes of the Table Round sauf¹¹ tweyne, that was Syr Launcelot and Sire Percyvale.

Thenne the kyng, at the quenes request, made hym to alyghte and to unlace his helme, that the quene myxt see hym in the vysage. Whanne she beheld hym, she said: 'Sothely,¹² I dar wel say that Sir Launcelot begyt hym, for never two men resembled more in lyknes, therfor it nys no merveyle though he be of grette prowess.' So a lady that stode by the quene said: 'Madame, for Goddes sake, oughte he of ryghte to be so good a knyghte?' 'Ye,¹³ forsothe,' said the quene, 'for he is of alle partyes¹⁴ come of the best knyghtes of the world, and of the hyest bygnage¹⁵, for Sir Launcelot is come but of the eighth degre from oure Lord Jesu Cryst, and Syre Galahalt is of the nynthe degre from oure Lord Jesu Cryst: therfor I dar saye they be the grettest gentilmien of the world.' And thenne the kyng

¹ suggestion (moving)² proved, tried³ supposed⁴ readily⁵ less⁶ put on, at and⁷ made ready⁸ the midst⁹ surpassed¹⁰ trodden down, overthrown¹¹ save, except¹² in truth¹³ yea¹⁴ in all respects¹⁵ lineage

5. *Jesseraunce*: more correctly, *jazerant*, a word of Saracenic origin (found in the name *Algiers*), occurring in OF. in the *Chanson de Roland*; it signifies (*NED*): 'A light coat of armor, composed of splints or small plates of metal riveted to each other, or to a lining of some stout material.' Scott (*Quentin Durward*) calls it a 'flexible shirt of linked mail.'

24. *Cryst*: 'the first true gentleman that ever breathed' (Dekker). The sentence, from 'for Sir Launcelot' to 'world,' is original with Malory.

and al estates¹ wente home unto Camelot, and soo wente to evensonge to the grete mynster. And soo after upon that to souper, and every knygt sette in his owne place as they were toforehand. Thenne anon they herd crakyng and cryenge of thonder, that hem thought the place shold alle todryve.² In the myddes of this blast entred a sonne beaume more clerer by seven tymes than ever they sawe daye, and a they were alyghted of the grace of the Holy Ghoost. Thenne began every knyghte to behold other, and eyther sawe other by theire semyng fayrer than ever they sawe afore. Not for thenne³ there was no knyght myghte speke one word a grete whyle, and soo they loked every man [o]n other, as they had ben dome.⁴ Thenne ther entred into the halle the Holy Graile, coverd with whyte samyte, but ther was none myght see hit, nor who bare hit. And there was al the halle fulfylled⁵ with good odoures, and every knygt had suche metes and drynkes as his best loved in this world. And whan the Holy Grayle had be⁶ born thurgh the halle, thenne the holy vessel departed sodenly, that the wyste not where hit becam.⁷ Thenne had they alle brethe to speke. And thenne the kynge yelded⁸ thankynges to God of his good grace that he had sente them. 'Certes,' said the kynge, 'we oughte to thanke oure Lord Jesu gretefully, for that he hath shewed us this daye atte reverence of this hyhe feest of Pentecost.' 'Now,' said Sir Gawayn, 'we have ben served this daye of what metes and drynkes we thought on, but one thyng begyled us — we myght not see the Holy Grayle; it was soo precyously coverd; wherfor I wil make here avowe⁹ that to-morne,¹⁰ withoute lenger¹¹ abydyng,¹² I shall labour in the quest of the Sancgreal, that I shalle hold me oute a twelvemoneth and day, or more yf nede be, and never shalle I retorne ageyne unto the courte tyl I have sene hit more openly than hit hath ben sene here and yf I may not spede,¹³ I shall retorne ageyne, as he that maye not be ageynst the wil of our Lord Jesu Cryste.' Whan they of the Table Round herde Syr Gawayne saye so, they arose up the most party,¹⁴ and maade suche avowes as Sire Gawayne had made.

¹ ranks, degrees² burst asunder³ nevertheless⁴ dumb⁵ filled⁶ been⁷ went⁸ gave⁹ vow¹⁰ to-morrow¹¹ longer¹² delay¹³ succeed¹⁴ most part, greater number

Anone as Kynge Arthur herd this, he was gretely dyspleasyd, for he wyste wel they myghte not ageynesaye¹ theyre avowes. 'Allas!' said Kynge Arthur unto Sir Gawayn, 'ye have nyghe slayne me with the avowe and promesse that ye have made. For thurgh yow ye have herafte² me the fayrest selsauship and the truest of knyghthode that ever were sene togylers in any realme of the world. For whanne they departe from hens, I am sure they alle shalle never mete more in thys world, for they shalle dye many in the quest. And soo it forthynketh³ me a lytel, for I have loved them as wel as my lyf.'

KING HORN

The romance probably antedates 1250; the Cambridge manuscript (1530 lines), here followed, may be dated about 1310. The best edition is by Joseph Hall (Oxford, 1901).

The story is of a prince, who, set adrift by conquering Saracens, lands in Westernesse, is loved by the king's daughter of that country, is banished when his love is discovered, returns in time to save her from another marriage, wins her for himself, and finally becomes king of his native land.

According to Hall (pp. lii-lii) : '*King Horn* is essentially English, a plain impersonal tale, picturing a simple state of society, and full of primitive touches centuries older than its language, written in a metre which is a natural development of Old English prosody. . . . [The] poem, as we have it, is a story of the Danish raids on the north coast of England. It is, in the main, Teutonic in spirit and details: the names of the persons and places are mostly Teutonic, or assimilated to Teutonic forms. . . . Rimenhold and Aylmar, and his court on the banks of the Dorsetshire Stour, are English additions to the original story, and the real Westernesse is Ireland. Then all the localities and surroundings are Celtic. Murry . . . is king of Suddene, the country of the Southern Damnonii, that is, of Cornwall. . . . The banished Horn finds shelter at the court of an Irish king; with Irish troops, and accompanied by an Irish page, he recovers his father's kingdom. His rival is a Breton prince, Modi, king of Rennes. These indications point to the conclusion that the story is originally a British tradition, arising out of some temporary success in which the Cornish, aided by the Irish, checked the westward progress of the English invader. It was annexed by some English poet, and recast to suit the similar position of his countrymen resisting the attacks of the Danes. Finally, it emerged at a much later date in the shape of the extant versions, under the impulse of the rising spirit of the English people recovering from the Norman Conquest, which found its peculiar literary expression in a whole cycle of outlaw and exile stories in verse and prose.

¹ retract, break

² bereft, deprived (with two accusatives)

³ grieves

'The literary interest of *King Horn* may be characterized in few words. It is probably the earliest of the English romances, but as a specimen of the purely narrative sort it has great merit. In swift succession of brief and incisive speeches it tells a simple story effectively, without distraction of elaborate description or reflective comment. But the characters are very simply conceived, the female element is slight, and lovemaking is quite subordinate to fighting. Although picturesque and even poetic situations, such as Horn's farewell to his boat, are not wanting, the language is bald and unimaginative. A certain epic simplicity and energetic directness of expression, to which the short verse lends itself, are the main merits of its style.'

Our extract runs from line 445 to line 586. The earlier course of the story is as follows: Saracens kill King Murry of Suddene, and set adrift the young prince, Horn, and his companions. The latter are carried over the water to Westernesse, where King Aylmar receives them kindly, and bids the steward Athelbrus teach Horn the arts of harping and song, and train him to serve the wine and carve at table. Horn is soon loved by all the court, but especially by the king's daughter, Rymenhild. She bids the steward bring him to her chamber, but Athelbrus, in dread of the king's anger, brings instead Horn's companion, Athulf. To Athulf she gives her love, supposing him to be Horn; but Athulf finally explains the mistake, and she upbraids the steward. Athelbrus again promises to bring Horn, and this time really does so. Rymenhild declares her love to Horn, and offers to marry him. He gently declines, on the ground that he is unworthy by birth for the honor, whereupon she swoons. Horn is moved by her grief, and suggests that marriage might be possible if he were a knight.

Rymenhild, þat swete þing,
 Wakede of hire swozning.¹
 'Horn,' quap² heo,³ 'wel⁴ sone⁵
 þat schal beon⁶ idone⁷:
 þu schalt beo⁸ dubbed knigt
 Are⁹ come seve¹⁰ nigt.
 Have her¹¹ þis cuppe,
 And þis ryng þeruppe¹²
 To Aylbrus þe¹³ stuard,
 And se¹⁴ he holde foreward.¹⁵

¹ swoon² quoth, said³ she⁴ very; MS. vel⁵ soon⁶ be⁷ done (OE. *gedōn*)⁸ be⁹ before¹⁰ seven¹¹ here¹² thereupon, in addition¹³ MS. &¹⁴ see (that)¹⁵ keep his promise

7. Have: the Harleian and Laud MSS. have here a word for 'take.'

Seie ¹ Ihc him biseche
 Wij loveliche ² speche
 ꝥat he adun ³ falle
 Bifore ꝥe king in halle,
 And bidde ꝥe king ariȝte ⁴
 Dubbe ꝥe to kniȝte.
 Wij selver and wij golde
 Hit wurp ⁵ him wel iȝolde. ⁶
 Crist him lene ⁷ spede ⁸
 ꝥin erende ⁹ to bede. ¹⁰

Horn tok his leve,
 For hit was neȝ ¹¹ eve.
 Aꝥelbrus he soȝte,
 And ȝaf ¹² him ꝥat ¹³ he broȝte,
 And tolde him ful ȝare ¹⁴
 Hu ¹⁵ he hadde ifare, ¹⁶
 And sede ¹⁷ him his nede,
 And bihet ¹⁸ him his mede. ¹⁹

Aꝥelbrus also swiꝥe ²⁰
 Went to halle blive. ²¹
 'Kyng,' he sede, 'ꝥu leste ²²
 A tale mid ꝥe beste :
 ꝥu schalt bere crune ²³
 To-moreȝe ²⁴ in ꝥis tune ²⁵ ;
 To-moreȝe is ꝥi feste ²⁶ ;
 ꝥer ²⁷ bihoveꝥ ²⁸ geste. ²⁹
 Hit nere ³⁰ noȝt forloren ³¹
 For to kniȝti ³² Child ³³ Horn,

¹ say
² loving, affectionate
³ down
⁴ as is right
⁵ shall be
⁶ requited
⁷ grant
⁸ success
⁹ mission
¹⁰ make known (OE. *bēodan*)
¹¹ nearly

¹² gave
¹³ that which, what
¹⁴ readily, quickly
¹⁵ how
¹⁶ fared (OE. *gefaren*)
¹⁷ said, told
¹⁸ promised
¹⁹ reward
²⁰ as fast as possible
²¹ in haste
²² listen

²³ crown
²⁴ OE. *to morgen*
²⁵ town
²⁶ feast
²⁷ for this
²⁸ is fitting
²⁹ entertainment, conspicuous act
³⁰ would not be
³¹ lost, thrown away, without value
³² knight
³³ aspirant to knighthood

þine armes for to welde¹;
God² knigt he schal gelde.³

þe king sede sone:

'þat is wel idone —

5

Horn me wel iquemep⁴;

God knigt him bisemep.⁵

He schal have mi dubbing,

And afterward [be] mi derling;

And alle his feren⁶ twelf

10

He schal knigten himself:

Alle he schal hem⁷ knigte

Bifore me þis nigte.⁷

Til þe lizt of day sprang

Ailmar him þugte⁸ lang.

15

þe day bigan to springe;

Horn com⁹ bivore þe kinge

Mid his twelf yfere¹⁰ —

Sume hi¹¹ were lufere.¹²

20

Horn he dubbede to knigte,

Wiþ swerd and spures brigte.

He sette him on a stede¹³ whit;

þer nas no knigt hym ilik.¹⁴

He smot him a litel wigt,¹⁵

And bed¹⁶ him beon a god knigt.

25

Apulf fel a¹⁷ knes þar¹⁸

Bivore þe king Aylmar.

'King,' he sede, 'so kene,¹⁹

Grante me a bene²⁰;

Nu²¹ is knigt Sire Horn

30

þat in Suddenne²² was iboren²³;

¹ wield

² good, valorous

³ turn out, become

⁴ pleases

⁵ he seems

⁶ companions (OE. *gefeðran*)

⁷ them

⁸ it seemed to Ailmar

⁹ came

¹⁰ See l. 9

¹¹ some of them (some they)

¹² wicked

¹³ steed

¹⁴ like (OE. *gelic*)

¹⁵ a little bit, gently

¹⁶ bade

¹⁷ on

¹⁸ there

¹⁹ brave

²⁰ boon, request

²¹ now

²² See Intr., p. 11

²³ born (OE. *gebore*)

KING HORN

Lord he is of londe
 Over us þat bi him stonde¹;
 Þin armes he haf and scheld,²
 To fichte wiþ upon þe feld;
 Let him us alle knihte,
 For þat is ure³ rihte.
 Aylmar seðe sone ywis⁴;
 'Do nu þat þi wille is.'
 Horn adun lihte,⁵
 And makede⁶ hem alle knihtes.
 Muric⁷ was þe feste,
 Al of faire gestes;
 Ac Rymenhild nas noȝt þer,
 And þat hire þuhte⁸ seve⁹ ȝer.¹⁰
 After Horn heo¹¹ sente,
 And he to bure¹² wente.
 Nolde he noȝt go one¹³ —
 Apulf was his mone.¹⁴
 Rymenhild on flore stod
 (Hornes come¹⁵ hire þuhte god),
 And seðe: 'Welcome, Sire Horn,
 And Apulf kniȝt þe biforn.
 Kniȝt, nu is þi time
 For to sitte bi me;
 Do nu þat þu er¹⁶ of spake:
 To þi wif þu me take;
 Ef¹⁷ þu art trewe of dedes,
 Do nu ase þu sedes¹⁸;
 Nu þu hast wille þine,
 Unbind¹⁹ me of my pine.'²⁰

¹ merry, joyous

² seemed to her

³ seven

⁴ years

⁵ she

⁶ bower, lady's chamber

⁷ alone

¹⁴ companion (OE. *gemāna*)

¹⁵ coming

¹⁶ before

¹⁷ if

¹⁸ saidest

¹⁹ set free

²⁰ torment

'Rymenhild,' quap he, 'beo stille
 Ihc wulle¹ don al þi wille.
 Also² hit mōt³ bitide,⁴
 Mid spere I schal⁵ furst ride,
 And mi kniġthod prove,
 Ar⁶ Ihc þe ginne⁷ to woge.⁸
 We beþ⁹ kniġtes ġonge,
 Of o¹⁰ dai al isprunge,¹¹
 And of ure mestere¹²
 So¹³ is þe manere¹⁴;
 Wiþ sume opere kniġte
 Wel for his lemman¹⁵ fiġte,
 Or¹⁶ he eni¹⁷ wif take;
 Forþi¹⁸ me stondeþ¹⁹ þe more rape.²⁰
 To-day, so Crist me blesse,
 Ihc wulle do pruesse²¹
 For þi lue in þe felde,
 Mid spere and mid schelde;
 If Ihc come to lyve,²²
 Ihc schal þe take to wyve.²³
 'Kniġt,' quap heo, 'trewe,
 Ihc wene²⁴ Ihc mai þe leve²⁵;
 Tak nu her þis gold ring,
 God him is þe dubbing²⁶;
 Þer is upon þe ringe
 Igrave²⁷ "Rymenhild þe ġonge.²⁸"
 Þer nis non betere anonder²⁹ sunne,
 Þat eni man of telle cunne³⁰;

10

15

20

25

- 1 will
 2 even so
 3 must
 4 befall
 5 am bound to
 6 before
 7 begin
 8 woo
 9 are
 10 one, the same

- 11 having taken origin (OE. *gesprungen*)
 12 profession
 13 thus
 14 custom
 15 lady-love
 16 before
 17 any
 18 wherefore
 19 there exists for me
 20 haste

- 21 deeds of valor
 22 return alive
 23 wife
 24 think
 25 believe, trust
 26 ornamentatic
 27 engraved
 28 Read ġinge ()
 29 under
 30 may be able

For my lufe þu hit were,
 And on þi finger þu hit ¹ bere.
 Þe stones beop ² of suche grace ³
 Þat þu ne schalt in none place
 Of none dundes ⁴ beon ofdrad, ⁵
 Ne ⁶ on bataille beon amad, ⁷
 Ef þu loke þeran, ⁸
 And þenke upon þi lemman.
 And Sire Apulf, þi broþer,
 He schal have anoper.
 Horn, Ihc þe biseche
 Wip loveliche speche,
 Crist geve ⁹ god endinge, ¹⁰
 Þe aȝen ¹¹ to bringe.
 Þe kniȝt hire gan ¹² kesse,
 And heo him to blesse.
 Leve at ¹³ hire he nam, ¹⁴
 And into halle cam.

HAELOK THE DANE

Composed before 1300; the unique manuscript (3001 lines) is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and may be dated about 1310. The English poem is probably a translation of a lost French one. The best recent editions are those by Holthausen (London, 1901) and Skeat (Oxford, 1915).

The story is of an exiled prince of Denmark, who becomes a servant at the English court, marries the princess of that country, and finally succeeds to the thrones of both Denmark and England.

'The historical source of the name and fame, and perhaps of the story of Havelok, has been traced to the life of Olaf Sitrierson [see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*], a Danish prince, who, about the middle of the tenth century, reigned for a few years in Northumbria. . . . One of the strongest motives underlying the development of the Havelok legend may well have been political or national, namely, the desire of the Danes to prove their right to sovereignty in England' (Billings, pp. 18, 20).

1 MS. him

2 are

3 power, virtue

4 blows

5 afraid

6 nor

7 crazed, bewildered (OE. *semēdd*)

8 upon it

9 grant

10 MS. erndinge

11 back again

12 began

13 of

14 took

The ancient town-seal of Great Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, embodies a manifest allusion to our story. The seal is described at length by J. Hopkin, as quoted in Skeat's edition (pp. liv-lvi), from which the following extract is taken: 'On the right hand of Gryme stands his *protégé* Haveloc ("Habloc"), whom, during one of his mercantile excursions soon after his arrival in Lincolnshire, Gryme had the good fortune to save from imminent danger of shipwreck, and who proved to be the son of Gunter, King of Denmark, and who was therefore conveyed to the British court, where he subsequently received in marriage Goldburgh, the daughter of the British sovereign. Above Gryme is represented a hand, being emblematical of the hand of Providence by which Haveloc was preserved, and near the hand is the star which marks the point where the inscription begins and ends. Haveloc made such a favorable representation of his preserver at the British and Danish courts that he procured for him many honors and privileges. From the British monarch Gryme, who had already realized an abundance of wealth, received a charter, and was made the chief governor of Grimsby; and the Danish sovereign granted to the town an immunity (which is still possessed by the burgesses of Grimsby) from all tolls at the port of Elsinour. Gryme afterwards lived in Grimsby like a petty prince in his hereditary dominions. Above Haveloc is represented a crown, and in his right hand is a battle-axe, the favorite weapon of the Northmen, and in his [left] hand is a ring which he is presenting to the British princess Goldburgh ("Goldebvrgh"), who stands on the left side of Gryme, and whose right hand is held towards the ring. Over her head is a regal diadem, and in her left hand is a sceptre. Sir F. Madden states that it is certain that this seal is at least as old as the time of Edward I (and therefore contemporaneous with the MS.), as the legend is written in a character which after the year 1300 fell into disuse, and was succeeded by the black letter, or Gothic.'

The mention of Elsinore (Elsineur) suggests the name of Hamlet; for the connection between his story and that of Havelok, see the introduction to Israel Gollancz's *Hamlet in Iceland* (London, 1898).

Our extract embraces lines 862-1281.

The earlier part of the story runs as follows: A good king of England, Athelwold, under whom the realm had been serenely peaceful and happy, lay at the point of death, with only an infant daughter, Goldborough, to succeed him. He called to him his lords and thanes, and bade them tell him to whom he might most safely entrust the kingdom until such time as his daughter could bear rule. They all declared that Earl Godrich was the man; and to him the child and the regency of the country were accordingly committed. But love of power made this man false; when Goldborough was twenty years old, he imprisoned her in a strong castle, and himself continued to rule.

Meanwhile, a similar story had been enacted in Denmark. Its king, Birka-beyn, had before his death entrusted his young son and two small daughters to a supposedly faithful vassal, Godard. The latter with his own hands killed two of the children, and ordered a fisherman, Grim, to drown the boy Havelok by the light of the moon. Grim carried Havelok home in a sack; but when he

HAVELOK THE DANE

rose at midnight to drown the child, a bright and shining light streamed from the sack, and both Grim and his wife recognized this as a sign of blood in the boy. They fell on their knees before him, and promised faith and allegiance.

Soon after, Grim decided to flee from the country, and embarked in a boat with his wife, five children, and Havelok. Winds drove him to the coast of England, where he landed at the mouth of the Humber, and dwelt in a spot called, after him, Grimsby. Twelve years later, Havelok, now a well-grown youth, left the family of Grim to seek his fortune; and at this point our selection begins.

In the manuscript, *th* is frequently found for *ht* and for *t*; in such cases the change has been made without notice.

To Lincolne barfot he yede.¹

Hwan² he kam þe[r], he was ful wil,³
Ne haveðe⁴ he no frend to gangen⁵ til⁶;

Two dayes þer fastinde⁷ he yede,
þat non⁸ for his werk wolde⁹ him fede;

þe þridde¹⁰ day he herde calle:
'Bermen,¹¹ bermen, hider¹² forth alle!'

[Povre¹³ þat on fote yede]¹⁴
Sprongen¹⁵ forth so¹⁶ sparke of¹⁷ glede.¹⁸

Havelok shof¹⁹ dun²⁰ [wel]²¹ nyne or ten
Riht²² amideward²³ þe fen,²⁴

And stirte²⁵ forth to þe kok,²⁶
[þer²⁷ the erles mete he tok]²⁸

þat he bouhte²⁹ at þe brigge;
þe bermen let he alle ligge,²⁹

And bar³⁰ þe mete to þe castel,
And gat³¹ him þere a ferþing³² wastel.³³

¹³ poor people

¹⁴ Supplied by Skeat

¹⁵ sprang

¹⁶ as

¹⁷ from; MS. on

¹⁸ burning coal

¹⁹ shoved, pushed

²⁰ down

²¹ full

²² right

²³ in the midst of

²⁴ mud

²⁵ started, leaped

²⁶ cook

²⁷ where

²⁸ bought

²⁹ lie

³⁰ bore

³¹ got

³² farthing

³³ cake

þet oper¹ day he kepte² ok³
 Swiþe yerne⁴ þe erles kok,
 Til þat he saw⁵ him on þe b[r]igge,
 And bi him mani fishes ligge.⁶
 Þe erles⁷ mete havede he bouht
 Of Cornwaile,⁸ and kalde⁹ oft:
 ' Bermen, bermen, hider swiþe¹⁰ ! '
 Havelok it herde, and was ful bliþe
 Þat he herde ' bermen ' calle ;
 Alle made he hem¹¹ dun falle
 Þat in his gate¹² yeden¹³ and stode,¹⁴
 Wel sixtene laddes gode.
 Als¹⁵ he lep¹⁶ þe kōk [un-]til,¹⁷
 He shof hem alle upon an hyl¹⁸ ;
 Astirte¹⁹ til him with his rippe,²⁰
 And bigan þe fish to kippe.²¹
 He bar up wel a cartelode
 Of segges,²² laxes,²³ of playces²⁴ brode,²⁵
 Of grete laumprees,²⁶ and of eels²⁷ ;
 Sparede he neyþer tos ne heles
 Til þat he to þe castel cam,
 Þat men fro him his birþene²⁸ nam.²⁹
 Þan men haveden³⁰ holpen³¹ him down
 With þe birþene of his croun,³²
 Þe kok [bi] stod, and on him low,³³
 And þou[h]te him stalworþe man ynow,³⁴
 And seyde : ' Wiltu³⁵ ben wit[h] me ?

1 second

2 kept watch for; MS. kepte he

3 also

4 very eagerly

5 MS. say

6 lying (to lie)

7 MS. herles

8 MS. cornwalie

9 called

10 quickly

11 them

12 way

13 went

14 stood

15 as

16 leaped

17 unto

18 heap

19 leaped

20 fish-basket

21 take up quickly

22 cuttlefish

23 salmon

24 plaice

25 broad

26 lampreys

27 eels

28 burden

29 took

30 had

31 helped

32 crown, head

33 laughed

34 enough

35 wilt thou

þæt oþer¹ day he kepte² ok³
 Swiþe yerne⁴ þe erles kok,
 Til þat he saw⁵ him on þe b[r]igge,
 And bi him mani fishes ligge.⁶
 þe erles⁷ mete havede he bouht
 Of Cornwaile,⁸ and kalde⁹ oft:
 'Bermen, bermen, hider swiþe¹⁰ !'
 Havelok it herde, and was ful bliþe
 þat he herde 'bermen' calle;
 Alle made he hem¹¹ dun falle
 þat in his gate¹² yeden¹³ and stode,¹⁴
 Wel sixtene laddes gode.
 Als¹⁵ he lep¹⁶ þe kok [un-]til,¹⁷
 He shof hem alle upon an hyl¹⁸;
 Astirte¹⁹ til him with his rippe,²⁰
 And bigan þe fish to kippe.²¹
 He bar up wel a cartelode
 Of segges,²² laxes,²³ of playccs²⁴ brode,²⁵
 Of grete laumprees,²⁶ and of eles²⁷;
 Sparede he neyþer tos ne heles
 Til þat he to þe castel cam,
 þat men fro him his birþene²⁸ nam.²⁹
 þan men haveden³⁰ holpen³¹ him down
 With þe birþene of his croun,³²
 þe kok [bi] stod, and on him low,³³
 And þou[h]te him stalworþe man ynow,³⁴
 And seyde: 'Wiltu³⁵ ben wit[h] me?'

¹ second² kept watch for; MS. kepte he³ also⁴ very eagerly⁵ MS. say⁶ lying (to lie)⁷ MS. herles⁸ MS. cornwalie⁹ called¹⁰ quickly¹¹ them¹² way¹³ went¹⁴ stood¹⁵ as¹⁶ leaped¹⁷ unto¹⁸ heap¹⁹ leaped²⁰ fish-basket²¹ take up quickly²² cuttlefish²³ salmon²⁴ plaice²⁵ broad²⁶ lampreys²⁷ eels²⁸ burden²⁹ took³⁰ had³¹ helped³² crown, head³³ laughed³⁴ enough³⁵ wilt thou

Gladlike¹ wile Ich feden þe;
 Wel is set² þe mete þu etes,³
 And þe hire þat þu getes.
 'Goddot⁴!' quoth he, 'leve⁵ sire,
 Bidde⁶ Ich you non oþer hire;
 But yeveþ⁷ me inow to ete,
 Fir⁸ and water Y wile you fete,⁹
 þe fir blowe, an[d] ful wele maken;
 Sticks kan Ich breken and kraken,¹⁰
 And kindlen [ek]¹¹ ful wel a fyr,
 And maken it to brennen¹² shir¹³;
 Ful wel kan Ich cleven¹⁴ shides,¹⁵
 Eles toturven¹⁶ of here¹⁷ hides;
 Ful wel kan Ich dishes swilen,¹⁸
 And don al þat ye evere wilen.¹⁹
 Quoth þe kok: 'Wile I no more;
 Go þu²⁰ yunder, and sit þore,²¹
 And Y shal yeve þe ful fair bred,
 And make þe broys²² in þe led.²³
 Sit now down and et²⁴ ful yerne;
 Dapeit hwo²⁵ þe mete werne²⁶!'

Havelok sette him dun anon²⁷
 Also²⁸ stille als²⁹ a ston,
 Til he havede ful wel eten;
 Þo²⁹ havede Havelok fayre geten.³⁰
 Hwan he havede eten inow,
 He kam to þe welle, water updrow,
 And filde þe[r] a michel³¹ so³²;

1 gladly
 2 bestowed
 3 eatest
 4 God wot! MS. soddot
 5 dear
 6 ask, pray
 7 give
 8 fire
 9 fetch
 10 crack
 11 also

12 burn
 13 brightly
 14 cleave
 15 thin pieces of wood
 16 strip (*NED. s.v. tirre*)
 17 their
 18 wash
 19 wish
 20 thou
 21 there
 22 brewis, broth

23 caldron, kettle
 24 eat
 25 a curse upon him who
 26 denies
 27 straightway
 28 as
 29 then
 30 done well
 31 large
 32 tub

Bad he non ageyn¹ him go ;
 Bitwen² his hondes he bar it in,
 A[l] him one,³ to þe kichin.
 Bad he non him water to fete,
 Ne⁴ fro b[r]igge to bere þe mete.
 He bar þe turves,⁵ he bar þe star,⁶
 þe wode fro the brigge he bar ;
 Al that evere shulde⁷ he nytte,⁸
 Al he drow,⁹ and al he kitte¹⁰ ;
 Wolde he nevere haven rest,
 More þan he were¹¹ a best.¹²
 Of alle men was he mest¹³ meke,
 Lauhwinde¹⁴ ay, and bliþe of speke¹⁵ ;
 Evere he was glad and bliþe,
 His sorwe¹⁶ he coupe¹⁷ ful wel mipe.¹⁸
 It ne was¹⁹ non so litel knave,²⁰
 For to leyken,²¹ ne for to plawe,²²
 þat he ne wo[l]de with him pleye²³ ;
 þe children that y[e]den in þe weie
 Of him he²⁴ deden²⁵ al he[r] wille,
 And with him leykeden here²⁶ fille.
 Him loveden alle, stille and bolde,
 Knictes, children, yunge and olde²⁷ ;
 Alle him loveden pat him sowen,²⁸
 Boþen heye²⁹ men and lowe.
 Of him ful wide þe word sprong,
 Hu³⁰ he was mike[l],³¹ hu³⁰ he was strong,
 Hu fayr man God him havede maked,³²

¹ opposite² MS. but bitwen³ alone⁴ nor⁵ turf, peat⁶ a kind of sedge or reed⁷ MS. shulden⁸ require for use⁹ drew¹⁰ cut ; MS. citte¹¹ if he were (subj.)¹² beast¹³ most¹⁴ laughing¹⁵ speech¹⁶ sorrow¹⁷ could¹⁸ conceal¹⁹ there was²⁰ lad, boy²¹ frolic²² sport²³ play²⁴ they²⁵ did²⁶ their²⁷ MS. holde²⁸ saw²⁹ high³⁰ how ; MS. h³¹ tall³² made

HAVELOK THE DANE

But-on þat ¹ he was alinest naked :
 For he ne havede nouht to shride ²
 But a kouel ³ ful unride,⁴
 Þat [was] ful ⁵ and swiþe wicke,⁶
 Was it nouht worth a fir-sticke.
 Þe cok bigan of him to rewe,⁷
 And bouhte ⁸ him cloþes, al span-newe⁹ ;
 He bouhte ⁸ him boþe hosen and shon,
 And sone dide him don es on.¹⁰

Hwan he was cloþed, [h]osed, and shod
 Was non so fayr under God,
 Þat evere yete in erþe were,¹¹
 Non þat evere moder ¹² bere ¹³ ;
 It ¹⁴ was nevere man þat yemede ¹⁵
 In kineriche,¹⁶ þat so wel semede ¹⁷
 King or cayser for to be ;
 Þan ¹⁸ he was shrid,¹⁹ so semede ²⁰ he ;
 For þanne ¹⁸ he ²¹ weren alle samen ²²
 At Lincolne, at þe gamen,²³
 And þe erles men woren ²⁴ al[le] þore,²⁵
 Þan was Havelok bi þe shuldren ²⁶ more ²⁷
 Þan þe meste ²⁸ þat þer kam ;
 In armes him no man [ne] nam
 Þat he doune sone ne caste ;
 Havelok stod over hem als a mast.
 Als he was heie, so ²⁹ he was strong,³⁰
 He was boþe stark ³¹ and long ³² ;
 In Engelond [was] non hise þer ³³

¹ except in one respect, that
² to clothe himself
³ garment
⁴ rough
⁵ foul
⁶ mean
⁷ have pity
⁸ bought
⁹ quite new
¹⁰ made him put them on
¹¹ was

¹² mother
¹³ bore
¹⁴ there
¹⁵ governed
¹⁶ kingdom ; MS. kinneriche
¹⁷ was fit
¹⁸ when
¹⁹ clothed
²⁰ seemed
²¹ they
²² together

²³ games
²⁴ were
²⁵ there
²⁶ shoulders
²⁷ taller
²⁸ tallest
²⁹ MS. al
³⁰ MS. long
³¹ sturdy
³² MS. strong
³³ peer, equal

Of strengþe þat evere kam him ner.¹
 Als he was strong, so was he softe²;
 Þey³ a man him misdede⁴ ofte,
 Nevere more he him misseyde,⁵
 Ne hond on him with yvele leyde.
 Of bodi was he mayden clene;
 Nevere yete in garth,⁶ ne in grene,
 Wit[h] hire⁷ ne wolde [he] leyke ne lye,
 No more þan it were a stric.⁸

In þat time al Engelond⁹
 Þerl¹⁰ Godrich haveð in his hond,
 And he gart¹¹ komen into þe tun¹²
 Mani erl and mani barun;
 And alle [men] þat lives¹³ were
 In Eng[e]lond, þanne wer þere,
 Þat þey havenen after sent
 To ben þer at þe parlement.
 With hem com mani champioun,¹⁴
 Mani wiht¹⁵ ladde,¹⁶ blac, and brown;
 An[d] fel¹⁷ it so þat yunge men,
 Wel abouten nine or ten,
 Bigunnen þere¹⁸ for to layke:
 Þider komen boþe stronge and wayke¹⁹;
 Þider komen lesse and more,
 Þat in þe borw²⁰ þanne weren þore²¹;
 Chaumpiouns,²² and starke laddes,
 Bondemen,²³ with here²⁴ gaddes,²⁵
 Als he²⁶ comen fro þe plow;
 Þere was sembling²⁷ inow!

¹ near² mild, gentle³ though⁴ injured⁵ reproached, spoke ill of; MS. misdede⁶ garden, enclosure; MS. game⁷ her (a woman)⁸ old hag⁹ MS. Hengelond¹⁰ the earl¹¹ made, had¹² town¹³ alive¹⁴ MS. chambion¹⁵ stout¹⁶ lad¹⁷ happened¹⁸ MS. þe¹⁹ weak²⁰ borow²¹ there²² MS. chaunpiouns²³ husbandmen²⁴ their²⁵ goads²⁶ they²⁷ assembling

HAVELOK THE DANE

For it ¹ he was non horse-knave, ²
 þou ³ þei sholden in honde have, ⁴
 þat he ne kam þider, þe leyk ⁵ to se:
 Biforn here fet þanne lay a tre,
 And putten ⁶ with a mikel ston
 þe starke laddes, ful god won.⁷
 þe sion was mikel, and ek ⁸ gret,
 And al so hevi so a net ⁹;
 Grundstalw[u]rþe ¹⁰ man he sholde ¹¹ be
 þat mouhte ¹² liften it to his kne;
 Was þer neyþer clerc ne prest ¹³
 þat mihte ¹² liften it to his brest:
 þerwit[h] ¹⁴ putten the chaumpiouns ¹⁵
 þat þider comen with þe barouns.
 Hwoso mihte putten þore
 Biforn anoþer an inch or more,
 Wore ¹⁶ he yung, wore he old,¹⁷
 He was for a kempe ¹⁸ told.¹⁹

Also ²⁰ þe[i] stoden, an[d] ofte streden,²¹
 þe chaumpiouns,¹⁵ and ek the ladden ²²;
 And he ²³ maden mikel strout ²⁴
 Abouten þe alþerbeste ²⁵ b[o]ut,²⁶
 Havelok stod, and lokede þertil ²⁷;
 And of puttingge he was ful wil,²⁸
 For nevere yete ne saw he or ²⁹
 Putten the stone, or ²⁰ þanne þor.
 Hise mayster bad him gon þerto,

¹ there

² groom

³ MS. þo

⁴ Though they (*for* he) should have [work]
 in hand

⁵ game

⁶ put; MS. pulten

⁷ in considerable numbers (won = plenty)

⁸ also.

⁹ young ox

¹⁰ extremely stalwart

¹¹ had need to

¹² could

¹³ priest

¹⁴ with this

¹⁵ MS. chaumpiouns

¹⁶ were

¹⁷ MS. hold

¹⁸ knight, champion

¹⁹ counted

²⁰ as

²¹ stared

²² lads

²³ they

²⁴ contention

²⁵ best of all

²⁶ bout, throw

²⁷ thereto

²⁸ inexperienced

²⁹ before

ROMANCES

Als he coupe¹ þerwith do.
 Þo hise mayster it him bad,
 He was of him sore adrad;
 Þerto he stirte² sone anon,
 5 And kipte³ up þat hevi ston,
 Þat he sholde put[t]en wiþe;
 He putte, at þe firste siþe,⁴
 Over⁵ alle þat þer wore,
 Twel[ve] fote,⁶ and sumdel⁷ more.
 10 Þe chaumpiouns⁸ þat [þat] put sowen,⁹
 Shuldreden he ilc oper,¹⁰ and lowen¹¹;
 Wolden he no more to putting gange,
 But seyde: 'We dwellen her to¹² longe!
 Þis selkouth¹³ mihte nouht ben hyd:
 15 Ful sone it was ful loude kid¹⁴
 Of Havelok, hu¹⁵ he warp¹⁶ þe ston
 Over þe laddes everilkon¹⁷;
 Hu¹⁵ he was fayr, hu¹⁶ he was long,
 Hu¹⁵ he was wiht,¹⁸ hu¹⁶ he was strong;
 20 Þorhut¹⁹ England yede þe speke,²⁰
 Hu¹⁵ he was strong, and ek [ful] meke;
 In the castel, up in þe halle,
 Þe knihtes speken þerof alle,
 So that Godrich it herde wel.
 25 Þe[i] speken of Havelok, everi del,²¹
 Hu¹⁵ he was strong man and hey,
 Hu¹⁵ he was strong, and ek [ful] sley²²;
 And þouhte²³ Godrich: 'Þoru²⁴ þis knave
 Shal Ich Engeland al have,
 30 And mi sone after me;

1 could
 2 leaped
 3 snatched
 4 time
 5 beyond
 6 feet
 7 somewhat
 8 MS. chaumpiouns

9 saw
 10 one another
 11 laughed
 12 too
 13 wonder
 14 made known
 15 MS. hw
 16 threw

17 every one
 18 courageous
 19 throughout; MS. þoruth
 20 speech; MS. speche
 21 on every side (?)
 22 skilful; MS. fri
 23 MS. þouthte
 24 through

HAVELOK THE DANE

For so I wile þat it be.
 King¹ Apelwald me dide² swere
 Upon al þe messe-gere³
 þat Y shu[ld]de his douhter yive⁴
 þe hexte⁵ [man] þat mihte live,
 þe beste, þe fairest, þe strangest⁶ ok
 þat gart⁷ he me sweren on þe bok.
 Hwere mihte I finden ani so hey
 So Havelok is, or so sley?
 þou[h] Y souhte hepen⁸ into Ynde,⁹
 So fayr, so strong, ne mihte Y finde.
 Havelok is þat ilke¹⁰ knave
 þat shal Goldeborw have.
 þis pouhte [he] with trechery,
 Wit[h] traysoun, and with felony;
 For he wende¹¹ þat Havelok wore¹²
 Sum cherles sone, and no more;
 Ne shulde he haven of Engellond
 Onlepi¹³ forw¹⁴ in his hond
 With hire þat was þerof [þe] eyr,¹⁵
 þat boþe was god and swiþe fair.
 He wende þat Havelok wer a þral,¹⁶
 þerþoru¹⁷ he wende haven al
 In Engellond, þat hire riht was;
 He werse was¹⁸ þan Sathanas
 þat Jesu Crist in erþe shop¹⁹;
 Hanged worþe²⁰ he on an hok!
 After Goldebo[r]w sone he sende,
 þat was boþe fayr and hende,²¹
 And dide hire to Lincolne bringe²²;

1 MS. the king
 2 caused
 3 utensils of the mass
 4 MS. yeve
 5 highest, tallest
 6 strongest
 7 made
 8 hence

9 India
 10 very
 11 supposed
 12 was
 13 a single
 14 furrow
 15 heir
 16 slave

17 for this reason, by this means
 18 MS. was werse
 19 shaped, created
 20 may he be
 21 gentle, courteous
 22 and had her brought to Lincoln

ROMANCES

Belles dede he ageyn hire ¹ ringen,
 And joie he made hire swiþe mikel,
 But neþeles ² he was ful swikel.³
 He seyde þat he sholde hire yive ⁴
 þe fayrest man that mihte live.
 She answerede and seyde anon,
 Bi [Jesu] Crist and bi Seint John,⁵
 þat hire sholde no man wedde,
 Ne no man bringen hire to ⁶ bedde,
 But ⁷ he were king or kinges eyr,
 Were he nevere man so fayr.

Godrich þe erl was swiþe wroth
 þat she swor swilk ⁸ an oth,
 And seyde : ' Hweþer ⁹ þou wilt be
 Quen and levedi ¹⁰ over me ?
 Þou shalt haven a gadeling,¹¹
 Ne shalt þou haven non oþer king ;
 Þe shal spusen ¹² mi cokes knave ;
 Shalt ¹³ þou non oþer loverd ¹⁴ have.
 Dapeit þat ¹⁵ þe oþer ¹⁶ yive ⁴
 Everemore hwil I live !
 To-mo[r]we sholen ¹⁷ ye ¹⁸ ben weddet,
 And, maugre þin,¹⁹ togidere beddet.'
 Goldeborw gret,²⁰ and was hire ille ²¹ ;
 She wolde ben ded, bi hire wille.

On þe morwen, hwan day was sprungen,
 And daybelle ²² at [þe] kirke ²³ rungen,
 After Havelok sente þat Judas,
 þat werse was þanne Sathanas,

¹ at her approach

² nevertheless

³ deceitful

⁴ MS. yeve

⁵ MS. Iohan

⁶ MS. to hire

⁷ unless

⁸ such

⁹ MS. hwor

¹⁰ lady

¹¹ vagabond, low fellow

¹² marry

¹³ MS. ne shalt

¹⁴ lord

¹⁵ a curse upon him who

¹⁶ another

¹⁷ shall

¹⁸ MS. ye sholen

¹⁹ in spite of thee

²⁰ wept

²¹ it was ill for her

²² matin-bell

²³ church

And seyde: 'Mayster, wiltu¹ wif²?'

'Nay,' quoth Havelok, 'bi my lif!

Hwat sholde Ich with wive³ do?

I ne may hire fede, ne cloþe, ne sho.

[H]wider sholde Ich wimman⁴ bringe?

I ne have none kin[n]es⁵ þinge.

I ne have hus,⁶ Y ne have cote,

I ne⁷ have stikke, Y ne have sprote,⁸

I ne have neyþer bred ne sowel,⁹

Ne cloth, but of an old whit¹⁰ couel.¹¹

þis¹² cloþes, þat Ich onne have,

Aren þe kokes, and Ich his knave.'

Godrich stirt¹³ up, and on him dong¹⁴

[With dintes¹⁵ swiþe hard and strong],¹⁶

And seyde: 'But¹⁷ þou hire take

þat Y wole yeven þe to make,¹⁸

I shal hangen þe ful heye,

Or Y shal pristen¹⁹ ut þin eie.²⁰

Havelok was one,²¹ and was adrad,²²

And grauntede him al þat he bad.

þo²³ sende he after hire sone,²⁴

þe fayrest wymman under mone²⁵;

And seyde til hire, [fals]¹⁶ and slike,²⁶

þat wicke þral, þat foule swike²⁷:

'But þu þis man understonde,²⁸

I shal flemen²⁹ þe of³⁰ londe;

Or þou shal[t] to þe galwes³¹ renne,³²

wilt thou; MS. wilte
ake a wife
MS. wif
woman
of no kind
MS. hws
MS. ne i
prout, twig
elish eaten with bread
MS. hold with
garment

12 these
13 started
14 struck
15 blows
16 Supplied by Skeat
17 unless
18 mate, wife
19 thrust
20 MS. heie
21 alone
22 MS. odrat

23 then
24 soon
25 the moon
26 smooth
27 traitor
28 receive
29 banish
30 from
31 gallows
32 run

And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne.¹
 Sho² was adrad, for he so þrette,³
 And durste⁴ nouht þe spusing⁵ lette⁶;
 But þey⁷ hire likede⁸ swiþe ille,
 5 [Sho] þouhte it was Godes wille:
 God, þat makes to growen þe korn,
 Formede hire wimman to be born.
 Hwan he havede him don,⁹ for drede,
 þat he sholde hire spusen and fede,
 10 And þat she sholde til him holde,
 þer weren penies¹⁰ picke tolde,¹¹
 Mikel plente upon þe bok:
 He¹² ys¹³ hire yaf, and she [e]s¹⁴ tok.
 He¹⁵ weren spused fayre and wel:
 15 þe messe he dede,¹⁶ [and] everidel¹⁷
 þat fel¹⁸ to spusing, a¹⁹ god cle[r]k,²⁰
 þe Erchebishop ut of²¹ Yerk,
 þat kam to þe parlement,
 Als God him havede þider sent.
 20 Hwan he²² togydere in Godes lawe
 Weren,²³ þat²⁴ folc²⁵ ful wel it sawe,
 He ne wisten²⁶ hwat he mouhten,²⁷
 Ne he ne wisten [h]wat hem douhte²⁸ —
 þer to dwellen, or þenne²⁹ to gonge.
 25 þer ne wolden he dwellen longe;
 For he wisten, and ful wel sawe,
 Godrich³⁰ hem hatede, þe devel him awe³¹!
 And yf he dwelleden þer ouht³² —

1 burn
 2 she
 3 threatened
 4 dared
 5 marriage
 6 hinder
 7 though
 8 it pleased her
 9 caused; MS. don him
 10 pennies
 11 counted in great number

12 Godrich
 13 them
 14 them; MS. as
 15 they
 16 performed; MS. deden
 17 everything
 18 pertained
 19 MS. and
 20 clergyman
 21 out of, from
 22 they

23 Transposed from preceding line (weren togydere)
 24 MS. þat þe
 25 people
 26 knew
 27 could do
 28 availed them
 29 thence
 30 MS. þat Godrich
 31 own, possess; MS. h
 32 any space of time

þat fel Havelok ful wel on pouht —
 Men sholde don his leman shame,
 Or elles bringen in wicke¹ blame;
 þat were him levere² to ben ded.
 Forþi³ he⁴ token anoper red,⁵
 þat þei sholden þenne fle⁶
 Til⁷ Grim, and til⁷ hise sones þre;
 þer wenden⁸ he⁴ alþerbeste¹¹ to spede,¹⁰
 Hem¹¹ for to clope, and for to fede.
 þe lond he⁴ token under fote,¹²
 Ne wisten he⁴ non oþer bote,¹³
 And helden ay the rihte sti¹⁴
 Til he⁴ komen to Grimesby.

þanne¹⁵ he⁴ komen þere, þanne was Grim ded,
 Of him ne haveden he⁴ no red;
 But hise children alle fyve
 Alle weren yet on live¹⁶;
 þat¹⁷ ful fayre ayen¹⁸ hem neme,¹⁹
 Hwan he⁴ wisten þat he⁴ keme,²⁰
 And maden joie swiþe mikel;
 Ne weren he⁴ nevere ayen hem fikel.²¹
 On knes ful fayre he⁴ hem setten,
 And Havelok swiþe fayre gretten,²²
 And seyden: 'Welkome, loverd²³ dere,
 And welkome be þi fayre fere²⁴!
 Blessed be þat ilke þrawe²⁵
 þat þou hire toke in Godes lawe!
 Wel is us²⁶ we sen þe on lyve,
 þou mihte²⁷ us boþe selle and yive²⁸;

1 wicked
 2 liefer, rather
 3 therefore
 4 they
 5 counsel, help
 6 flee
 7 to
 8 thought
 9 best of all
 10 prosper

11 themselves
 12 they walked
 13 remedy
 14 road
 15 when
 16 in life = alive
 17 who
 18 towards
 19 went
 20 were coming

21 fickle
 22 greeted
 23 lord
 24 companion, wife
 25 time, moment
 26 to us; MS. hus
 27 might
 28 MS. yeve

And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne,¹
 Sho² was adrad, for he so þrette,³
 And durste⁴ nouht þe spusing⁵ lette⁶;
 But þey⁷ hire likede⁸ swiþe ille,
 [Sho] þouhte it was Godes wille:
 God, þat makes to growen þe korn,
 Formede hire winman to be born.

Hwan he havede him don,⁹ for drede,
 þat he sholde hire spusen and fede,
 And þat she sholde til him holde,
 þer weren penies¹⁰ picke tolde,¹¹
 Mikel plente upon þe bok:
 He¹² ys¹³ hire yaf, and she [e]s¹⁴ tok.
 He¹⁵ weren spused fayre and wel:
 þe messe he dede,¹⁶ [and] everidel¹⁷
 þat fel¹⁸ to spusing, a¹⁹ god cle[r]k,²⁰
 þe Erchebishop ut of²¹ Verk,
 þat kam to þe parlement,
 Als God him havede þider sent.

Hwan he²² togydere in Godes lawe
 Weren,²³ þat²⁴ folc²⁵ ful wel it sawe,
 He ne wisten²⁶ hwat he mouhten,²⁷
 Ne he ne wisten [h]wat hem douhte²⁸ —
 þer to dwellen, or þenne²⁹ to gonge.
 þer ne wolden he dwellen longe;
 For he wisten, and ful wel sawe,
 Godrich³⁰ hem hatede, þe devel him awe³¹!
 And yf he dwelleden þer ouht³² —

1 burn
 2 she
 3 threatened

4 dared
 5 marriage
 6 hinder

7 though
 8 it pleased her

9 caused; MS. don him

10 pennies

11 counted in great number

12 Godrich

13 them

14 them; MS. as

15 they

16 performed; MS. deden

17 everything

18 pertained

19 MS. and

20 clergyman

21 out of, from

22 they

23 Transposed from preceding line (weren togydere)

24 MS. þat þe

25 people

26 knew

27 could do

28 availed them

29 thence

30 MS. þat Godrich

31 own, possess; MS. hawe

32 any space of time

þat fel Havelok ful wel on þouht —

Men sholde don his leman shame,

Or elles bringen in wicke¹ blame;

þat were him levere² to ben ded.

Forþi³ he⁴ token anoþer red,⁵

þat þei sholden þenne fle⁶

Til⁷ Grim, and til⁷ hise sones þre;

þer wenden⁸ he⁴ alþerbeste⁹ to speðe,¹⁰

Hem¹¹ for to cloþe, and for to fede.

þe lond he⁴ token under fote,¹²

Ne wisten he⁴ non oþer bote,¹³

And helden ay the rihte sti¹⁴

Til he⁴ komen to Grimesby.

þanne¹⁵ he⁴ komen þere, þanne was Grim ded,

Of him ne haveden he⁴ no red;

But hise children alle fyve

Alle weren yet on live¹⁶;

þat¹⁷ ful fayre ayen¹⁸ hem neme,¹⁹

Hwan he⁴ wisten þat he⁴ keme,²⁰

And maden joie swiþe mikel;

Ne weren he⁴ nevere ayen hem fikel.²¹

On knes ful fayre he⁴ hem setten,

And Havelok swiþe fayre gretten,²²

And seyden: 'Welkome, loverd²³ dere,

And welkome be þi fayre fere²⁴!

Blessed be þat ilke þrawe²⁵

þat þou hire toke in Godes lawe!

Wel is us²⁶ we sen þe on lyve,

þou mihte²⁷ us boþe selle and yive²⁸;

5

10

15

20

25

¹ wicked

² liefer, rather

³ therefore

⁴ they

⁵ counsel, help

⁶ flee

⁷ to

⁸ thought

⁹ best of all

¹⁰ prosper

¹¹ themselves

¹² they walked

¹³ remedy

¹⁴ road

¹⁵ when

¹⁶ in life = alive

¹⁷ who

¹⁸ towards

¹⁹ went

²⁰ were coming

²¹ fickle

²² greeted

²³ lord

²⁴ companion, wife

²⁵ time, moment

²⁶ to us; MS. hus

²⁷ might

²⁸ MS. yeve

þou mayt us boþe yive¹ and selle,
 With-þat² þou wilt here dwelle.
 We haven, loverd, alle gode,³
 Hors,⁴ and net,⁵ and ship on flode,⁶
 Gold, and silver, and michel auhte,⁷
 þat Grim ure fader us bitauhte⁸;
 Gold, and silver, and oþer fe⁹
 Bad he us bitaken¹⁰ þe.
 We haven shep, we haven swin,
 Bileve¹¹ her, loverd, and al be þin !
 þo[u] shalt ben loverd, þou shalt ben syre,¹²
 And we sholen serven þe and hire ;
 And ure¹³ sistres sholen do
 Al that evere biddes sho¹⁴ ;
 He¹⁵ sholen hire cloþes¹⁶ washen and wringen,
 And to¹⁷ hondes water bringen ;
 He¹⁸ sholen bedden¹⁹ hire and þe,
 For levedi wile we þat she be.²⁰
 Hwan he²¹ þis joie havenen maked,
 Sithen²² stikes broken and kraked,
 And þe fir brouht on brenne,²³
 Ne was þer spared gos²⁴ ne henne,
 Ne þe ende,²⁵ ne þe drake,
 Mete he²⁶ deden plente make ;²⁷
 Ne wantede þere no god mete ;
 Wyn and ale deden he²⁸ fete,²⁹
 And maden³⁰ hem glade and bliþe,
 Wesseyl ledden³¹ he fele siþe.³²

¹ MS. yeve² provided that³ property, goods⁴ horses⁵ cattle⁶ sea⁷ possessions ; MS. auhte⁸ delivered, committed ; MS. bitawchte⁹ property¹⁰ deliver, commit¹¹ remain¹² seignior, master¹³ our ; MS. hure¹⁴ she¹⁵ they¹⁶ MS. cloþen¹⁷ for¹⁸ put to bed¹⁹ afterwards²⁰ to burning²¹ goose²² duck ; MS. hende²³ they had plenty of meats prepared²⁴ they caused to be brought²⁵ MS. made²⁶ they led wassails (drank healths)²⁷ many times

On þe niht, as Goldeborw lay,
 Sory and sorwful was she ay,
 For she wende she were biswike,¹
 Þat she were ²yeven³ unkyndelike.⁴
 O niht⁵ saw she þerinne a liht,⁶
 A swiþe fayr, a swiþe bryht,
 Al so briht, al so shir⁷
 So⁸ it were a blase⁹ of fir.
 She lokede no[r]þ, and ek south,
 And saw it comen ut of his mouth,
 Þat lay bi hire in þe bed —
 No ferlike¹⁰ þou[h] she were adred !
 Þouhte she : ' [H]wat may this bimene¹¹ ?
 He beth¹² heyman¹³ yet, als Y wene¹⁴ ;
 He beth heyman er he be¹⁵ ded.'
 On hise shuldre, of gold red
 She saw a swiþe noble croiz,¹⁶
 Of an angel she herde a voyz¹⁷ :
 ' Goldeborw, lat þi sorwe be,¹⁸
 For Havelok, þat haveþ spuset þe,
 Is¹⁹ kinges sone and kinges eyr²⁰ ;
 Þat bikenneth²¹ þat croiz so fayr.
 It bikenneth more — þat he shal
 Denemark haven, and Englund al ;
 He shal ben king, strong and stark,
 Of Engelond and Denemark ;
 Þat shal[t] þu wit[h] þin eyne sen,
 And þo[u] shalt quen and levedi ben.'
 Þanne²² she havede herd the stevene²³
 Of þe angel ut of hevene,

5

10

15

20

25

30

¹ cheated, deceived² MS. shere (*for* she were)³ given⁴ beneath her rank⁵ in the night⁶ light⁷ shining⁸ as if⁹ blaze¹⁰ wonder¹¹ mean¹² is¹³ nobleman¹⁴ think¹⁵ cross¹⁶ voice¹⁷ put aside thy sorrow¹⁸ MS. he¹⁹ heir²⁰ betokens²¹ when²² voice

ROMANCES

She was so fele sijes¹ blithe
 þat she ne mihte hire ioie mythe²—
 But Havelok sone anon she kiste;
 And he slep, and nouht ne wiste³
 Hwat þat aungel havede seyð.

5

GOWER, CONFESSIO AMANTIS

John Gower—'moral Gower,' as Chaucer called him—
 1330, and died between August 15 and October 24, 1408. He was of a Kentish family, a layman, and a man of some wealth. For the most part, he probably resided in London, and was personally known to Richard II. While living in Southwark, he married one Agnes Groundolf on January 25, 1397/8, and perhaps had been married before. He lies buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, formerly called St. Mary Overey. The effigy of the poet, beneath a three-arched canopy, exhibits his head resting upon three volumes, bearing the names of his three principal works—*Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*.

Of these the first, now known as the *Mirour de l'Omme* (*Speculum Hominis*), has only recently been discovered. This is in French, the *Vox Clamantis* in Latin, and the *Confessio Amantis* in English. The French work was the earliest; the Latin work was produced about 1382, while the English work assumed its final form in 1393. The *Confessio Amantis* contains more than 33,000 lines, surpassing the *Mirour de l'Omme* by above 4000 lines. Besides these three Gower wrote several minor works. The whole has been critically edited in four volumes by G. C. Macaulay (Oxford, 1899-1902). In the French and the Latin poems, Gower's tendency is markedly didactic. In the English poem his general theme is love, which he illustrates by a series of 112 stories.

Lowell said, in his essay on Chaucer: 'Gower has positively raised tediousness to the precision of a science.' A fairer judgment is that by Ker (*English Literature, Mediæval*, pp. 225-226): 'Gower should always be remembered along with Chaucer; he is what Chaucer might have been without genius and without his Italian reading, but with his critical tact, and much of his skill in verse and diction. The *Confessio Amantis* is monotonous, but it is not dull. Much of it at a time is wearisome, but as it is composed of a number of separate stories, it can be read in bits, and ought to be so read. Taken one at a time the clear bright little passages come out with a meaning and a charm that may be lost when the book is read too perseveringly.'

The *Apollonius of Tyre*, the first of our extracts, was first written in Greek (probably third century), and afterwards translated into Latin. Gower paraphrased the Latin, and the Shakespearean (?) *Pericles* is, in turn, based upon

¹ so many times, so very

² conceal

³ knew

Gower. For further particulars concerning Apollonius, see my *First Book in Old English*, pp. 164-165.

The Aeson story is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (7. 162-293). 132 lines of the original being expanded to 230. A portion of this Ovidian passage (*Mt.* 7. 197 ff.), extremely condensed by Gower, reappears in Shakespeare's *Tempest* 5. 1. 33-50.

APOLLONIUS OF TYRE

8. 597-911

Of Tharsiens¹ his leve anon
 He² tok, and is to schipe gon.
 His cours he nam³ with seil updrawe,⁴
 Where as⁵ Fortune doth⁶ the lawe,
 And scheweth, as I schal reherse,
 How sche⁷ was to this lord diverse,⁸
 The which⁹ upon the see sche ferketh.¹⁰
 The wynd aros, the weder derketh,¹¹
 It blew and made such tempeste
 Non anchor mai the schip areste,
 Which hath tobroken al his gere¹²;
 The schipmen stode in such a feere,
 Was non that myhte himself bestere,¹³
 Bot evere awaite upon the lere,¹⁴
 Whan that thei scholde drenche¹⁵ at ones.
 Ther was ynowh withinne wones¹⁶
 Of wepinge and of sorghe¹⁷ tho¹⁸;
 This yonge king makth mochel wo
 So for to se the schip travaile¹⁹:
 Bot al that myhte him nocht availe;
 The mast tobrak,²⁰ the seil torof²¹;
 The schip upon the wawes drof,

5

10

15

20

¹ the people of Tarsus² Apollonius³ took⁴ drawn up⁵ wherever⁶ makes, lays down⁷ Fortune⁸ contrary⁹ Apollonius¹⁰ conducts¹¹ grows dark¹² tackle¹³ bestir¹⁴ destruction, shipwreck (OE. *lyre*)¹⁵ drown¹⁶ reach¹⁷ sorrow¹⁸ then¹⁹ labour²⁰ snapped²¹ was torn

Unto the gamen¹ alle and some²
 Of hem that ben delivere³ and wyhte,⁴
 To do such maistrie⁵ as thei myhte.
 Thei made hem naked as thei scholde,
 5 For so that ilke⁶ game wolde,⁷
 As it was tho custume and us⁸;
 Amonges hem was no refus.⁹
 The flour of al the toun was there,
 And of the court also ther were;
 10 And that was in a large place
 Riht evene¹⁰ afore the kinges face,
 Which Artestrathes¹¹ thanne hihthe.¹²
 The pley was pleid riht in his sihte,
 And who most worthi was of dede
 15 Receive he scholde a certain mede,¹³
 And in the cite bere a pris.¹⁴
 Appolinus, which, war¹⁶ and wys,
 Of every game couthe¹⁶ an ende,¹⁷
 He thoghte assaie,¹⁸ hou so it wende,¹⁹
 20 And fell among hem into game;
 And there he wan him such a name,
 So as the king himself acompteth,²⁰
 That he alle othre men surmonteth,
 And bar the pris above hem alle.
 25 The king bad that into his halle
 At souper-time he schal be broght;
 And he cam thanne, and lefte²¹ it noght,
 Withoute compaignie, alone.
 Was non so semlich²² of persone,
 30 Of visage and of limes²³ bothe,

¹ games
² one and all
³ active
⁴ nimble
⁵ feat
⁶ same
⁷ required
⁸ use

⁹ refusal
¹⁰ directly
¹¹ Arcestrates
¹² was called
¹³ reward
¹⁴ prize
¹⁵ wary
¹⁶ knew

¹⁷ an ende = pretty thorough
¹⁸ to try
¹⁹ might turn out
²⁰ deems
²¹ neglected
²² seemly
²³ limbs

If that he hadde what to clothe¹;
 At souper-time, natheles,
 The king amidde al the pres²
 Let³ clepe⁴ him up among hem alle,
 And bad his mareschall⁵ of halle
 To setten him in such degre⁶
 That he upon him myhte se.
 The king was sone set and served,
 And he, which hath his pris deserved
 After the kinges oghne⁷ word,
 Was mad beginne⁸ a middel bord,⁹
 That bothe king and queene him sihe.¹⁰
 He sat and caste aboute his yhe,
 And sih the lordes in astat,¹¹
 And with himself wax¹² in debat,
 Thenkende¹³ what he hadde lore¹⁴;
 And such a sorwe he tok therfore,
 That he sat evere stille and thoghte,
 As he which of no mete¹⁵ roghte.¹⁶
 The king behield his hevynesse,¹⁷
 And, of his grete gentillesse,
 His doghter, which was fair and good,
 And ate¹⁸ bord before him stod,
 As it was thilke¹⁹ time usage,²⁰
 He bad to gon on his message,
 And fonde²¹ for to make him glad.
 And sche dede as hire fader bad,
 And goth to him the softe pas,²²
 And axeth whenne²³ and what he was,
 And preith he scholde his thoghtes leve.²⁴

¹ wear
² press, crowd
³ bade
⁴ to call
⁵ marshal
⁶ station
⁷ own
⁸ to begin, sit at the head of

⁹ table
¹⁰ might see
¹¹ state
¹² grew
¹³ thinking
¹⁴ lost
¹⁵ food
¹⁶ took account, recked

¹⁷ sadness
¹⁸ at the
¹⁹ that
²⁰ custom
²¹ attempt
²² pace
²³ whence
²⁴ abandon

5
10
Mi name is hote² Appolinus;
And of mi richesse it is thus -
Upon the see I have it lore.
The contre wher as I was bo:
Wher that my lond is and mi
I lefte at Tyr, whan that I wente;
The worschipe⁴ of this worldes aghte,⁵
Unto the god ther I betaghte.⁶
And thus togedre as thei tuo speeke,
The teres runne be⁷ his cheeke.

The king, which therof tok good kepe,⁸
Hath gret pite to sen him wepe,
And for his doghter sende ayein,
15 And preide hir faire, and gan to sein⁹
That sche no lengere wolde drecche,¹⁰
Bot that sche wolde anon forth fecche
Hire harpe, and don al that sche can
To glade with¹¹ that sory man.
20 And sche, to don hir fader¹² heste,¹³
Hir harpe fette,¹⁴ and, in the feste,¹⁵
Upon a chaier which thei fette
Hirself next to this man sche sette;
With harpe bothe, and ek with mouthe,
25 To him sche dede al that sche couthe
To make him chiere¹⁶ — and evere he sik
And sche him axeth hou him liketh.¹⁸
'Madame, certes¹⁹ wel,' he seide,
'Bot, if ye the mesure pleide
30 Which, if you list, I schal you liere,²⁰
It were a glad thing for to hiere.'

¹ by
² called
³ income
⁴ honor
⁵ goods
⁶ committed
⁷ along, down

⁸ heed
⁹ say
¹⁰ delay
¹¹ with which to gladden
¹² father's
¹³ command
¹⁴ fetched

GOWER, CONFESSIO AMANTI

' Ha, lieve sire,¹ tho² quod sche,
 ' Now tak the harpe, and let me se
 Of what mesure that ye mene.
 Tho preith the king, tho preith the queer
 Forth with³ the lordes alle arewe,⁴
 That he som merthe wolde schewe;
 He takth the harpe, and in his wise
 He tempreth,⁵ and of such assise⁶
 Singende he harpeth forth withal,
 That as a vois celestial
 Hem thoghte⁷ it souneth in here ere,
 As thogh that he an angel were.
 Thei gladen of his melodie;
 Bot, most of all the compainie,
 The kinges doghter, which it herde,
 And thoghte ek⁸ hou that he ansuerde,
 Whan that he was of⁹ hire opposed,¹⁰
 Withinne hir herte hath wel supposed
 That he is of gret gentillesse.
 Hise dedes ben therof witnesse,
 Forth with the wisdom of his lore;
 It nedeth noght to seche¹¹ more —
 He myhte noght have such manere,
 Of gentil blod bot-if¹² he were.
 Whanne he hath harped al his fille,
 The kinges heste to fulfille,
 Away goth dissh, away goth cuppe,
 Doun goth the bord, the cloth was uppe,
 Thei risen and gon out of halle.

The king his chamberlein let calle,
 And bad that he be alle weie¹³
 A chambre for this man pourveie,¹⁴

ir

er with

² successively (in a row)

⁶ tunes

⁶ in such manner

⁷ it seemed to them

⁸ eke, also

⁹ by

¹⁰ questioned

¹¹ seek

¹² unless

¹³ without fa

¹⁴ purvey, p

Which nyh his oghne chambre be.¹
 'It schal be do,² mi lord,' quod he.
 Appolinus, of whom I mene,³
 Tho tok his leve of king and queene,
 And of the worthi maide also,
 Which preide unto hir fader tho
 That sche myhte of that yonge man
 Of tho⁴ sciences whiche he can⁵
 His lore⁶ have; and in this wise
 The king hir granteth his aprise,⁷
 So that himself therto assente.
 Thus was acorded, er thei wente,
 That he, with al that evere he may,
 This yonge faire freisshe may⁸
 Of that he couthe scholde enforme;
 And, full assented in this forme,
 Thei token leve as for that nyht.
 And, whanne it was amorwe⁹ lyht,
 Unto this yonge man of Tyr
 Of clothes and of good atir,
 With gold and selver to despende,¹⁰
 This worthi yonge lady sende;
 And thus sche made him wel at ese;
 And he, with al that he can plesse,
 Hire serveth wel and faire¹¹ ayein.
 He tawhte hir til sche was certein
 Of harpe, of citole,¹² and of rote,¹³
 With many a tun¹⁴ and many a note
 Upon musique, upon mesure;
 And of hire harpe the temprure¹⁵
 He tawhte hire ek, as he wel couthe.

1 should be
 2 done
 3 make mention
 4 those
 5 knows

6 teaching
 7 instruction
 8 damsel
 9 in the morning
 10 spend

11 fairly
 12 dulcimer
 13 violin
 14 tune
 15 tuning

Bot, as men sein that frele¹ is youthe,
 With leisir² and continuance
 This mayde fell upon a chance,
 That Love hath mad him³ a querele⁴.
 Ayein hire youthe freissh and frele, 5
 That malgre⁵ wher⁶ sche wole⁷ or noght,
 Sche mot⁸ with al hire hertes thoght
 To Love and to his lawe obeie;
 And that sche schal ful sore abeie,⁹
 For sche wot¹⁰ nevere what it is, 10
 Bot evere among¹¹ sche fieleth¹² this.
 Thenkende upon this man of Tyr,
 Hire herte is hot as eny fyr,
 And otherwhile it is acale;
 Now is sche red, nou is sche pale, 15
 Riht after the condicion
 Of hire ymaginacion;
 Bot evere among hire thoghtes alle,
 Sche thoghte, what so mai befallē,
 Or¹³ that sche lawhe,¹⁴ or that sche wepe, 20
 Sche wolde hire goode name kepe,
 For feere of wommanysshe¹⁵ schame.
 Bot, what in ernest and in game,
 Sche stant¹⁶ for love in such a plit¹⁷
 That sche hath lost al appetit 25
 Of mete, of drinke, of nyhtes reste,
 As sche that not¹⁸ what is the beste.
 Bot, for to thenken al hir fille,
 Sche hield¹⁹ hire ofte times stille
 Withinne hir chambre, and goth noght oute; 30

1 frail
 2 leisure
 3 for himself
 4 attack
 5 in spite of
 6 whether
 7 will

8 must
 9 atone for
 10 knows
 11 in the course (of things)
 12 feels
 13 whether
 14 laugh

15 womanly
 16 stands
 17 plight
 18 knows not
 19 held

The king was of hire lif in doute,
Which wiste nothing what it mente.

5 Bot fell a time, as he out wente
To walke, of princes sones thre
Ther come and felle to his kne;
And ech of hem in sondri wise
Besoghte and profreth his servise,
So that he myhte his doghter have.
10 The king, which wolde his honour save,
Seith sche is siek,¹ and of that speche
Tho² was no time to beseche;
Bot ech of hem do make³ a bille⁴
He bad, and wryte his oghne wille,
His name, his fader, and his good⁵;
15 And whan sche wiste hou that it stod,
And hadde here⁶ billes oversein,⁷
Thei scholden have ansuere ayein.
Of this conseil thei weren glad,
And writen as the king hem bad;
20 And every man his oghne bok
Into the kinges hond betok,⁸
And he it to his dowhter sende,
And preide hir for to make an ende
And wryte ayein hire oghne hond,
25 Riht⁹ as sche in hire herte fond.

The billes weren wel received;
Bot sche hath alle here loves weyved,¹⁰
And thoghte tho was time and space
To put hire in hir fader¹¹ grace,
30 And wrot ayein, and thus sche saide:
'The schame which is in a maide
With speche dar noght ben unloke,¹²

¹ sick

² then

³ cause to make, have made

⁴ memorandum

⁵ property

⁶ their

⁷ looked over

⁸ delivered

⁹ just

¹⁰ put aside, reje

¹¹ father's

¹² unlocked

Bot in writinge it mai be spoke;
 So wryte I to you, fader, thus:
 Bot-if I have Appolinus,
 Of al this world, what so betyde,
 I wol non other man abide;
 And certes if I of him faile,
 I wot riht wel, withoute faile,
 Ye schull for me be dowhterles.
 This lettre cam, and ther was press
 Tofore¹ the king, ther as² he stod;
 And whan that he it understod,
 He yaf³ hem ansuer by and by⁴;
 Bot that was do⁵ so prively
 That non of othres conseil wiste.
 Thei toke her leve, and wher hem liste⁶
 Thei wente forth upon here weie.

5

10

15

ÆSON'S RESTORATION TO YOUTH

S. 3945-4174

Jason, which sih his fader old,
 Upon Medea made him⁷ bold
 Of art magique, which sche couthe,⁸
 And preith hire that his fader⁹ youthe
 Sche wolde make ayeinward¹⁰ newe;
 And sche, that was toward him trewe,
 Behihte¹¹ him that sche wolde it do,
 Whan that sche time sawh therto.
 Bot what sche dede in that matiere¹²
 It is a wonder thing to hiere;
 Bot yit, for the novelleric,¹³
 I thenke tellen a partie.¹⁴

20

25

¹ before
² where
³ gave
⁴ directly
⁵ done

⁶ it was pleasing to them
⁷ himself
⁸ knew
⁹ father's
¹⁰ again

¹¹ promised
¹² matter
¹³ novelty
¹⁴ part

Thus it befell upon a nyht,
 Whan ther was noght bot sterreliht,
 Sche was vanysht riht as hir liste,¹
 That no wyht bot hirself it wiste,
 And that was ate² mydnyht-tyde.
 The world was stille on every side;
 With open hed and fot al bare,
 Hir her³ tosprad,⁴ sche gan to fare;
 Upon hir clothes gert⁵ sche was.
 Al specheles,⁶ and on the gras,
 Sche glod⁷ forth as an addre doth —
 Non otherwise sche ne goth —
 Til sche cam to the freisshe flod;
 And there a while sche with⁸ stod.
 Thries sche torned hire aboute,
 And thries ek sche gan down loute,
 And in the flod sche wette hir her;
 And thries on the water ther
 Sche gaspeth with a drecching⁹ onde,¹⁰
 And tho sche tok hir speche on honde.
 Ferst sche began to clepe¹¹ and calle
 Upward unto the sterres alle;
 To wynd, to air, to see, to lond,
 Sche preide, and ek hield up hir hond
 To Echates¹² — and gan to crie —
 Whiche is goddessse of sorcerie.
 Sche seide: ' Helpeth¹³ at this nede,
 And, as ye maden me to spede¹⁴
 Whan Jason cam the flees to seche,
 So help me nou, I you beseche.'
 With that sche loketh, and was war
 Doun fro the sky ther cam a char,¹⁵

¹ pleased

² at the

³ hair

⁴ spread abroad (Lat. *nudos humeris
infusa capillos*)

⁵ girt (Lat. *vestes induta recinctas*)

⁶ Lat. *per muta silentia noctis*

⁷ glided

⁸ by, near

⁹ troubled, agonizing

¹⁰ breath

¹¹ cry

¹² Hecate

¹³ help

¹⁴ success

¹⁵ chariot

The which dragouns aboute drowe¹;
 And tho sche gan hir hed down bowe,
 And up sche styh,² and faire and wel
 Sche drof³ forth bothe char and whel⁴
 Above in th' air among the skyes.

5

The lond of Crete and tho⁵ parties⁶
 Sche soughte, and faste gan hire hye,⁷
 And there, upon the hulles⁸ hyhe
 Of Othrin and Olimpe also,
 And ek of othre hulles mo,⁹
 Sche fond¹⁰ and gadreth herbes suote¹¹;
 Sche pulleth up som be the rote,
 And manye with a knyf sche scherth,¹²
 And alle into hir char sche berth.

10

Thus whan sche hath the hulles sought,
 The flodes ther foryat sche nought¹³ —
 Eridian and Amphisos,

15

Peneie and ek Spercheidos;
 To hem sche wente, and ther sche nom¹⁴

Bothe of the water and the fom,

20

The sond, and ek the smale stones —
 Whiche as sche ches¹⁵ out for the nones¹⁶;

And of the Rede See a part

That was behovelich¹⁷ to hire art

¹ drew
² ascended
³ drove
⁴ wheel
⁵ those
⁶ parts

⁷ hie, hasten
⁸ hills
⁹ more
¹⁰ found
¹¹ sweet
¹² shears

¹³ not
¹⁴ took
¹⁵ chose
¹⁶ nonce
¹⁷ needful

6. Crete: this reposes upon a *corrupt reading* of the Latin; read perhaps 'race.'

9. Othrin: Othrys; Medea flies in a circuit about Thessaly.

7. Eridian: not the Eridanus (Po), but the Apidanus, one of the tributaries of the Peneus, which flows through the vale of Tempe. — Amphisos: a small river flowing northeast into the modern Gulf of Volos.

8. Spercheidos: the Spercheius is south of the preceding.

3. Rede See: Macaulay suggests that Gower read 'rubrum' for the 'refluum' of Ovid's line 267.

Sche tok ; and, after that, aboute
 Sche soughte sondri sedes oute
 In feldes, and in many greves¹;
 And ek a part sche tok of leves ;
 Bot thing which mihte hire most availe
 Sche fond in Crete² and in Thessaile.

In daies and in nyhtes nync,
 With gret travaile and with gret pyne³
 Sche was pourveid⁴ of every piece,
 And torneth homward into Grece.
 Before the gates of Eson
 Hir char sche let awai to gon,
 And tok out ferst that was therinne ;
 For tho sche thoghte to beginne
 Such thing as semeth impossible,
 And made hirselven invisible,
 As sche that was with air enclosed,
 And mihte of no man be desclosed.
 Sche tok up turves of the lond,
 Withoute helpe of mannes hond,
 Al heled⁵ with the grene gras,
 Of which an alter mad ther was
 Unto Echates the goddesse
 Of art magique and the maistresse,
 And eft another to Juvente,⁶
 As sche which dede hir hole⁷ entente.
 Tho tok sche fieldwode⁸ and verveyne —
 Of herbes ben noght betre tueine —
 Of which anon, withoute let,⁹
 These alters ben aboute set.

Tuo sondri puttes¹⁰ faste¹¹ by
 Sche made, and with that hastely

¹ groves

² See note on l. 6, p. 47

³ MS. peyne

⁴ provided

⁵ covered

⁶ Youth (Hebe)

⁷ whole

⁸ woodland-growth ; Lat.
silva agresti, literally
 translated

⁹ hindrance ; we still say with-
 out let or hindrance

¹⁰ pits

¹¹ near

A wether which was blak sche slouh,¹
 And out therof the blod sche drouh,
 And dede into the pettes² tuo;
 Warm melk sche putte also therto,
 With hony meynd³; and in such wise
 Sche gan to make hir sacrifice,
 And cride and preide forth withal
 To Pluto the god infernal,
 And to the queene Proserpine.
 And so sche soghte out al the line
 Of hem that longen⁴ to that craft —
 Behinde was no name laft —
 And preide hem⁵ alle, as sche wel couthe,
 To grante Eson his ferste youthe.

5

10

This olde Eson broght forth was tho;

15

Awei sche bad alle othre⁶ go
 Upon peril that mihte falle;
 And with that word thei wenten alle,
 And leften there hem tuo alone.
 And tho sche gan to gaspe and gone,⁷
 And made signes many on,
 And seide hir wordes therupon;
 So that, with spellinge of hir charmes,
 Sche tok Eson in bothe hire armes,
 And made him for to slepe faste,
 And him upon hire herbes caste.
 The blake wether tho sche tok,
 And hiewh⁸ the fleissh, as doth a cok;
 On either alter part sche leide,
 And, with the charmes that sche seide,
 A fyr doun fro the sky alyhte,
 And made it for to brenne lyhte.

20

25

30

¹ slew
² pits

³ mingled
⁴ belong

⁵ them
⁶ others

⁷ gape
⁸ hewed

Bot whan Medea sawh it brenne,
Anon sche gan to sterte and renne¹
The fyri aulters al aboute.

Ther was no beste² which goth oute
More wylde than sche semeth ther:
Aboute hir schuldres hyng³ hir her,
As thogh sche were oute of hir mynde,
And torned in another kynde.⁴

Tho lay ther certein wode cleft,
Of which the pieces nou and eft⁵
Sche made hem in the pettes wete,⁶
And put hem in the fyri hete,
And tok the brond with al the blase,
And thries sche began to rase⁷

Aboute Eson, ther as he slepte;
And eft with water, which sche kepte,
Sche made a cercle aboute him thries,
And eft with fyr of sulphre twyes;
Ful many another thing sche dede,
Which is noght writen in this stede.⁸

Bot tho sche ran so up and doun,
Sche made many a wonder⁹ soun,¹⁰
Somtime lich¹¹ unto the cock,
Somtime unto the laverock,¹²
Somtime kacleth as a hen,
Somtime spekth as don the men;
And riht so as hir jargoun strangeth,¹³
In sondri wise hir forme changeth.
Sche semeth faie,¹⁴ and no womman;
For, with the craftes that sche can,
Sche was, as who seith,¹⁵ a goddesse;
And what hir liste, more or lesse,

¹ run
² beast
³ hung
⁴ turned to another nature
⁵ again

⁶ wet
⁷ race
⁸ place
⁹ wonderful
¹⁰ sound

¹¹ like
¹² lark
¹³ grows strange
¹⁴ fay, fairy
¹⁵ as one might

Sche dede,¹ in bokes as we finde,
 That passeth over mannes kinde.²
 Bot who that wole³ of wondres hiere —
 What thing sche wroghte in this matiere,
 To make an ende of that sche gan —
 Such merveile herde nevere man.

5

Apointed in the newe mone,
 Whan it was time for to done,
 Sche sette a caldron on the fyr,
 In which was al the hole atir⁴
 Wheron the medicine stod —
 Of jus,⁵ of water, and of blod —
 And let it buile⁶ in such a plit,⁷
 Til that sche sawh the spume⁸ whyt;
 And tho sche caste in rynde and rote,⁹
 And sed and flour¹⁰ that was for bote,¹¹
 With many an herbe and many a ston,
 Wherof sche hath ther many on.
 And ek Cimpheius the serpent
 To hire hath alle his scales lent;
 Chelidre hire yaf his adres skin,
 And sche to builen caste hem in;
 A part ek of the horned oule,
 The which men hiere on nyhtes houle;
 And of a raven, which was told¹²
 Of nyne hundred wynter old,
 Sche tok the hed with al the bile¹³;
 And as the medicine it wile,

10

15

20

25

¹ did
² surpasses human nature
³ will
⁴ preparation
⁵ juice

⁶ boil
⁷ manner
⁸ foam
⁹ rind and root

¹⁰ flower
¹¹ remedy
¹² reckoned
¹³ bill

20. Here the Latin has *nec defuit illic Squamea Cinyphii tenuis membrana chelydri* (*Met.* 7. 271-2), which King translates: 'skin membranous Of Afric's tortoise caught by Cinyphs' banks'; Gower quite misunderstands. — Cf. Shakespeare's 'fillet of a fenny snake' (*Macb.* 4. 1. 12).

Of the seewolf,¹ and for the hele²
 Of Eson, with a thousand mo
 Of thinges that sche hadde tho,
 In that caldroun togedre, as blyve,
 5 Sche putte, and tok thanne of oly
 A drie branche hem with to stere,
 The which anon gan floure⁵ and bere,
 And waxe al freissh and grene ayein.
 10 Whan sche this vertu hadde sein,⁶
 Sche let the leste drope of alle
 Upon the bare flor down falle ;
 Anon ther sprong up flour and gras
 Where as the drope falle was,
 15 And wox anon al medwe-grene,⁷
 So that it mihte wel be sene.

Medea thanne knew and wiste
 Hir medicine is for to triste,⁸
 And goth to Eson ther he lay,
 20 And tok a swerd was of assay,⁹
 With which a wounde upon his side
 Sche made, that therout mai slyde
 The blod withinne, which was old
 And sek¹⁰ and trouble¹¹ and fieble and cold.
 25 And tho sche tok unto his us¹²
 Of herbes al the beste jus,
 And poured it into his wounde ;
 That made his veynes fulle and sounde.
 And tho sche made his wounde clos,
 30 And tok his hand, and up he ros ;

¹ shark ; Ovid means the werwolf

² recovery

³ as quickly (as possible)

⁴ to stir them with

⁵ flower

⁶ seen

⁷ meadow-green

⁸ trust

⁹ proof, tried quality

¹⁰ sick

¹¹ turbid

¹² use

8. 'And lo! the sere wood in the caldron's heat Grew sudden green, and clad itself with leaves Afresh, and heavy drooped with berried fruit' (Ovtr. King).

And tho sche yaf him drink a drauhte,
 Of which his youthe¹ ayein he cauhte,²
 His hed, his herte, and his visage
 Lich unto twenty wynter age.
 Hise hore³ heres⁴ were away;
 And lich unto the freisshe Maii,
 Whan passed ben the colde schoures,⁵
 Riht so recovereth he his floures.

5

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (about 1380) has been called by Gaston Paris the jewel of English mediæval literature (*Hist. Litt. de la France* 30. 73), and by Schofield (*Eng. Lit. from the Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 215) 'incomparably the best of the English romances, and one of the finest in any language.' Of the unknown author Schofield adds: 'Next to Chaucer his contemporary, he is perhaps the greatest of our mediæval poets.'

The romance has been edited by Madden (*Syr Gawayne*), 1839, and by Morris (E.E.T.S. No. 4), 1864 (revised by Gollancz, 1897). For general accounts of the author and his work, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 357-373 (Gollancz), and Osgood's edition of *The Pearl*, pp. xi, xlvii-lix. A good prose translation is that by K. G. T. Webster (Boston, 1916), and there is a humorous adaptation of the poem in modern verse by Charlton M. Lewis (*Gawayne and the Green Knight: a Fairy Tale*), Boston, 1903.

The story is probably from a French or Anglo-Norman source; for analogues, see Madden's edition, pp. 305-7; M. C. Thomas, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* (Zurich, 1883), pp. 34-68; Gaston Paris, as above, 30. 75-7; Weston, pp. 88-102; Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* (Cambridge, 1916).

The incident of the beheading is found in the *Fled Brierend* (translated in *Irish Texts Soc.*, Vol. 2), an Irish tale at least as early as 1100, in which the hero Cuchulinn undergoes the test (Gaston Paris, p. 77; Weston, pp. 92 ff.).

It is an interesting fact that Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382-1439), a reputed descendant of the legendary Guy of Warwick, and 'a brave and chivalrous warrior in an age of chivalry,' entered the lists at Guines, near Calais, in the character of 'the grene knyght' on Jan. 6 (Twelfth Day) of either 1416 or 1417, and unhorsed a French knight, an exploit which he equaled on the two following days (Kittredge, *Harvard Notes* 5. 94-95). A recent article, dealing with the connection between this poem and the Order of the Garter, by Isaac Jackson, will be found in *Anglia* 37. 393-423; this author

¹ youth
² caught

³ hoar
⁴ hairs, hair

⁵ showers

believes the date to be 1362. Chambers sees in the Green Knight a form of the fertilization-spirit (*The Mediæval Stage* 1. 117, 185-186).

The language of our author presents peculiar difficulties, as does that of the whole school of alliterative poets which flourished during the second half of the fourteenth and the early years of the fifteenth centuries. Of this school Gollancz (p. 373) considers that he may well have been the master.

The poem is long, and full of incident and description. Its story runs thus: While Arthur's court is feasting at Camelot on New Year's Day, a knight all in green, and riding a green charger, rides into the hall. He challenges any knight present to give him a stroke with his battle-axe, on the understanding that it is to be rendered back to him a year later. All shrink back but Arthur's nephew, Gawain, who smites off the knight's head, whereupon the latter rides away with the head in his hand. Toward the end of the year Gawain sets out to find the knight, whom he eventually encounters. After various temptations, he endures the return-blow—which, however, inflicts but a slight wound—and later goes back to Arthur's court. (For more extended analyses, see J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Gawain*, pp. 86-88; Schofield pp. 215-217; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 364-365; Morris' ed., pp. viii-xxi.)

Morris has thus summarized the part of the poem which precedes our first extract: 'Arthur, the greatest of Britain's kings, holds the Christmas festival at Camelot, surrounded by the celebrated knights of the Round Table, . . . and ladies the loveliest that ever had life. This noble company celebrate the New Year by a religious service, by the bestowal of gifts, and the most joyous mirth. Lords and ladies take their seats at the table—Queen Guenever, the grey-eyed, gaily dressed, sits at the dais. . . . Arthur, in mood as joyful as a child, declares that he will not eat nor sit long at the table until some adventurous thing has occurred to mark the return of the New Year.

'The first course [is] announced with cracking of trumpets, with the noise of nakers and noble pipes.'

Our extracts are lines 130-249, 2212-2478. The final *z* (for *s*) at the end of words is frequently represented in the MS. by *g*; here it is uniformly printed as

- 130 Now wyl I of hor¹ servise say yow no more,
 For uch² wyge³ may wel wite⁴ no wont⁵ pat per were;
 Anoþer noyse ful newe nezed⁶ bilive,⁷
 pat þe lude⁸ mygt haf leve liflode⁹ to cach.¹⁰
 5 For uneþe¹¹ watz¹² þe noyce¹³ not a whyle¹⁴ sesed,¹⁵
 And þe fyrst cource in þe court kyndely¹⁶ served,

¹ their

² each

³ man

⁴ know

⁵ want

⁶ drew nigh

⁷ on a sudden

⁸ people

⁹ food

¹⁰ take

¹¹ scarcely

¹² was

¹³ noise (with which the first course was announced)

¹⁴ but just

¹⁵ ceased

¹⁶ duly

þer haless¹ in at þe halle-dor an aghlich² mayster,³
 On⁴ þe most⁵ on þe molde⁶ on mesure hyghe;
 Fro þe swyre⁷ to þe swange⁸ so sware⁹ and so þik,
 And his lyndes¹⁰ and his lymes so longe and so grete,
 Half etayn¹¹ in erde¹² I hope¹³ þat he were.
 Bot mon most I algate¹⁴ mynn¹⁵ hym to bene,
 And þat þe myriest¹⁶ in his muckel¹⁷ þat myȝt ride;
 For of bak and of brest al¹⁸ were his bodi sturne,¹⁹
 Bot²⁰ his wombe²¹ and his wast were worthily smale,
 And alle his fetures²² folgande,²³ in forme þat he hade,
 Ful clene²⁴;

For wonder of his hue²⁵ men hade,
 Set in his semblaunt²⁶ sene²⁷;
 He ferde²⁸ as²⁹ freke³⁰ were fade,³¹
 And overal³² enker-grene.³³

Ande al grayped³⁴ in grene pis gome³⁵ and his wedes,³⁶
 A strayt³⁷ cote³⁸ ful streȝt,³⁹ þat stek on⁴⁰ his sides,
 A mere⁴¹ mantile abof, mensked⁴² withinne,
 With pelure⁴³ pured⁴⁴ apert⁴⁵ þe pane⁴⁶ ful clene,⁴⁷
 With blyþe⁴⁸ blaunner⁴⁹ ful bryȝt, and his hod⁵⁰ boþe,
 Þat watz laȝt⁵¹ fro his lokkez, and layde on his schulderes;
 Heme⁵² wel haled,⁵³ hose of þat same grene,

1 rushes
 2 terrible
 3 lord
 4 one
 5 largest
 6 mold, earth
 7 neck
 8 loins
 9 square
 10 loins
 11 giant (OE. *eoten*)
 12 earth
 13 believe
 14 nevertheless
 15 think
 16 most agreeable (?)
 17 bigness
 18 though

19 stalwart
 20 yet
 21 belly
 22 parts of his body
 23 accordingly
 24 fine
 25 MS. hwe
 26 appearance
 27 plain, manifest
 28 acted
 29 like
 30 man
 31 vigorous
 32 all over
 33 dark (inky) green
 34 arrayed
 35 man
 36 apparel

37 tight-fitting
 38 tunic
 39 (?)
 40 clung to
 41 beautiful (OE. *mære*)
 42 adorned
 43 fur
 44 shorn close, so as to show
 only one color
 45 evidently
 46 cloth
 47 fair
 48 gay
 49 (white?) fur
 50 hood
 51 caught
 52 border
 53 trimmed (?)

þat spenet¹ on his sparlyr,² and clene spures under,
 Of brygt golde upon silk bordes³ barred ful ryche,⁴
 And scholes⁵ under schankes,⁶ þere þe schalk⁷ rides;
 And alle his vesture verayly watz clene verdure,⁸
 5 Boþe þe barres of his belt and oþer blyþe stones,
 þat were richely rayled⁹ in his aray clene,
 Aboutte hymself and his sadel, upon silk werkez.¹⁰
 þat were to tor¹¹ for to telle of tryfles þe halue,¹²
 þat were enbrauded¹³ abof wyth bryddes and flyges,¹⁴
 10 With gay gaudi¹⁵ grene,¹⁶ þe golde ay in myddes.
 þe pendauntes of his payttrure,¹⁷ þe proude cropure,¹⁸
 His molaynes,¹⁹ and alle þe metail anamayld²⁰ was þenne;
 þe steropes þat he stod on stayned of þe same,
 And his arsounz²¹ al after, and his apcl²² sturtes,²³
 15 þat ever glemered²⁴ and glent²⁵ al of grene stones.
 þe fole²⁶ þat he ferkkes²⁷ on, fyn²⁸ of þat ilke,²⁹

Sertayn³⁰;

A grene hors gret and pikke,
 A stede ful stif to strayne,³¹
 20 In brawdren³² brydel quik,³³
 To þe gome he watz ful gayn.³⁴

Wel gay watz þis gome gered³⁵ in grene,
 And þe here of his hed of his hors swete³⁶;
 Fayre fannand³⁷ fax³⁸ umbefoldes³⁹ his schulderes;
 25 A much⁴⁰ berd as a busk⁴¹ over his brest henges,

¹ fastened

² calf

³ edges

⁴ richly

⁵ (?)

⁶ legs

⁷ man

⁸ pure green

⁹ disposed

¹⁰ works

¹¹ too tedious

¹² half

¹³ embroidered

¹⁴ flies

¹⁵ yellowish

¹⁶ MS. of grene

¹⁷ poitrel, horse's breastplate

¹⁸ crupper

¹⁹ bits

²⁰ enameled

²¹ saddle-bows

²² noble

²³ stirrups (?)

²⁴ gleamed

²⁵ sparkled

²⁶ foal, steed

²⁷ pushes forward

²⁸ fine, choice

²⁹ same (color)

³⁰ certainly

³¹ curb

³² embroidered

³³ lively

³⁴ obedient

³⁵ arrayed

³⁶ fine

³⁷ waving

³⁸ hair

³⁹ falls about

⁴⁰ great

⁴¹ bush

þat wyth his higlich¹ here, þat of his hed reches,
 Watz evesed² al umbetorne,³ abof his elbowes,
 þat half his armes þerunder were halched⁴ in þe wyse
 Of a kynges capados,⁵ þat closes⁶ his swyre.
 þe mane of þat mayn⁷ hors much to hit lyke, 5
 Wel cresped⁸ and cemmed⁹ wyth knottes ful mony,
 Folden in wyth fildore¹⁰ aboute þe fayre grene,
 Ay a¹¹ herle¹² of þe here, anoper of golde;
 þe tayl and his toppyng¹³ twynnen¹⁴ of a sute,¹⁵
 And bounden boþe wyth a bande of a brygt grene, 10
 Dubbed¹⁶ wyth ful dere stonez, as þe dok lasted,¹⁷
 Syþen¹⁸ þrawen¹⁹ wyth a þwong²⁰ a þwarle²¹ knot alofte,
 þer mony bellez ful brygt of brende²² golde rungen.
 Such a fole upon folde,²³ ne freke þat hym rydes,
 Watz never sene in þat sale²⁴ wyth sygt er þat tyme, 15
 With yge²⁵;

He loked as layt²⁶ so lygt,²⁷
 So sayd al þat hym syge,²⁸
 Hit semed as no mon mygt
 Under his dynttez²⁹ dryge.³⁰ 20

Wheþer³¹ hade he no helme ne hawb[e]rgh nauþer,³²
 Ne no pysan,³³ ne no plate þat pented³⁴ to armes,
 Ne no schafte,³⁵ ne no schelde, to schune³⁶ ne to smyte,
 Bot in his on³⁷ honde he hade a holyn bobbe,³⁸
 þat is grattest³⁹ in grene when grevez⁴⁰ ar bare, 25

1 splendid
 2 clipped
 3 around
 4 enlaced (with the hair)
 5 hood
 6 encloses
 7 great
 8 crisped
 9 combed
 10 gold thread
 11 one
 12 filament, hair
 13 crest (mane)
 14 matched

15 kind
 16 adorned
 17 as far as the dock (fleshy
 part) extended
 18 beyond that point
 19 twisted
 20 thong
 21 tight (?)
 22 burnished
 23 earth
 24 hall
 25 eye
 26 lightning
 27 bright

28 saw
 29 strokes
 30 endure
 31 yet
 32 neither
 33 gorget
 34 pertained
 35 spear
 36 protect; MS. schwne
 37 one
 38 holly-branch
 39 most pronounced
 40 groves

And an ax in his oþer, a hoge¹ and unmete,²
 A spetos³ sparþe⁴ to expoun in spelle quoso myzt⁵;
 þe hede of an elnzerde,⁶ þe large lenkþe⁷ hade,
 þe grayn⁸ al of grene stele and of golde hewen,
 þe bit⁹ burnyst bryzt, with a brod egge,¹⁰
 As wel schapen to schere¹¹ as scharp rasores;
 þe stele¹² of a stif staf þe sturne¹³ hit¹⁴ bigrypte,¹⁵
 þat watz wounden¹⁶ wyth ym to þe wandez¹⁷ ende,
 And al bigraven¹⁸ with grene, in gracious¹⁹ werkes²⁰;
 A lace²¹ lapped aboute, þat louked²² at þe hede,
 And so after²³ þe halme²⁴ halched²⁵ ful ofte,
 Wyth tryed²⁶ tasselez þerto²⁷ tacched²⁸ innoghe²⁹
 On³⁰ botounz³¹ of þe bryzt grene brayden³² ful ryche.
 þis hapel³³ heldez hym in,³⁴ and þe halle entres,
 Drivande to þe hege dece,³⁵ dut³⁶ he no woþe,³⁷
 Haylsed³⁸ he never one, bot hege he overloked.³⁹
 þe fyrst word þat he warp⁴⁰: 'Wher is,' he sayd,
 'þe governour of þis gyng⁴¹? Gladly I wolde
 Se þat segg⁴² in syzt, and with hymself speke
 Raysoun.'⁴³

To knyȝtez he kest⁴⁸ his yze,
 And reled⁴⁴ hym up and down,
 He stemmed,⁴⁵ and con⁴⁶ studie
 Quo⁴⁷ walt⁴⁸ þer most renoun.

1 huge
 2 immense
 3 cruel
 4 sparth, battle-axe
 5 whoever might try to make it
 clear in speech
 6 ell (long)
 7 length
 8 blade
 9 cutting end
 10 edge
 11 shear
 12 handle
 13 firmly
 14 it (the axe-head)
 15 gripped, clasped
 16 MS. waunden

17 wand's, handle's
 18 engraved
 19 charming
 20 devices
 21 cord
 22 had a fastening
 23 along
 24 haulm, stalk (i.e. handle)
 25 caught
 26 choice
 27 to the cord
 28 attached
 29 sufficiently; MS. innoghee
 30 by means of
 31 buttons
 32 braided (i.e. the buttons)
 33 noble

34 takes his w
 35 dais
 36 feared
 37 injury
 38 saluted
 39 looked (lo
 40 flung
 41 company
 42 man
 43 cast
 44 strode
 45 halted
 46 began
 47 who
 48 bore

Ther watz loking on lenȝe,¹ þe lude² to beholde,
 For uch mon had mervayle quat hit mene myȝt,
 Þat a hapel and a horse myȝt such a hue lach,³
 As growe grene⁴ as þe gres — and grener hit semed,
 Þen⁵ grene aumayl⁶ on golde lowande⁷ bryȝter. 5
 Al studied þat þer stod, and stalked hym nerre,⁸
 Wyth al þe wonder of⁹ þe worlde, what he worch¹⁰ schulde.
 For fele¹¹ sellyez¹² had þay sen, bot such never are,¹³
 Forþi¹⁴ for fantoum and fayryȝe¹⁵ þe folk þer hit demed;
 Þerfore to answere watz arȝe¹⁶ mony apel¹⁷ freke,¹⁸ 10
 And al stouned¹⁹ at his steven,²⁰ and ston-stil seten²¹
 In a swoghe²² sylence þurȝ þe sale²³ riche,
 As al were slypped upon²⁴ slepe — so slaked²⁵ hor²⁶ lotez²⁷ —
 In hyȝe²⁸;
 I deme hit not²⁹ al for doute,³⁰ 15
 Bot sum³¹ for cortaysye —
 Bot let³² hym³³ þat al schulde loute³⁴
 Cast³⁵ unto þat wyȝe.³⁶ 249.

When the time of the return visit approaches (see introductory note), Gawain sets out, and on Christmas Eve reaches a castle, where he is hospitably received by its lord and lady. Here he learns that the Green Chapel, his destination, is only two miles distant, and accordingly accepts an invitation to stay till New Year's morning. During the host's hunting-expeditions, his wife makes love to Gawain, but is unsuccessful in her endeavors; the kisses she bestows upon him are by him passed on to the host at nightfall. However, Gawain does accept from the lady a green girdle, which is to render him secure from every danger. On his resort to the Green Chapel, he hears the sound as of a blade sharpened on a grindstone.

1 for a long time
 2 man
 3 obtain
 4 as to grow as green
 5 than
 6 enamel
 7 shining
 8 nearer
 9 in
 10 do
 11 many
 12 wonders
 13 before

14 wherefore
 15 enchantment
 16 timid
 17 noble
 18 knight
 19 were astonished
 20 voice
 21 sat
 22 impotent, dead
 23 hall
 24 as if all had slipped (slid)
 into sleep
 25 relaxed (or subdued)

26 their
 27 features (or looks; possibly voices)
 28 haste
 29 was not
 30 fear
 31 but that some were silent
 32 but that they let
 33 Arthur
 34 reverence
 35 make advances (?)
 36 champion

Gederez up hys grymme tole,* Gawayn to smyte;
 With alle þe bur² in his body he ber hit on lofte,³
 Munt⁴ as magtyly as⁵ marre hym he wolde;
 5 Hade hit dryven adoun as dreg⁶ as he atled,⁷
 þer hade⁸ ben ded of his dynt þat⁹ dogty watz ever.
 Bot Gawayn on þat giserne¹⁰ glyfte¹¹ hym bysyde,
 As hit com glydande adoun, on glode¹² hym to schende,¹³
 And schranke a lytel with þe schulderes, for þe scharp yrn
 10 þat oper schalk¹⁴ wyth a schunt¹⁵ þe schene¹⁶ wyththaldez,
 And þenne repreved he þe prynce with mony prowde word
 'þou art not Gawayn,' quoth þe gome, 'þat is so goud¹⁷ h
 þat never arged¹⁸ for no here,¹⁹ by hylle ne be vale,
 And now þou fles for ferde,²⁰ er þou fele harmez²¹;
 15 Such cowardise of þat knygt cowþe²² I never here.
 Nawþer fyked²³ I ne flage,²⁴ freke, quen þou myntest,²⁵
 Ne kest²⁶ no kavelacoun²⁷ in kynges hous Arthor,²⁸
 My hede flag²⁹ to my fote, and zet flag I never;
 And þou, er any harme hent,³⁰ argez in hert,
 20 Wherefore þe better burne me burde³¹ be called
 þerfore.'

Quoth Gawayn: 'I schunt³² onez,
 And so wyl I no more;
 Bot þaz³³ my hede falle on þe stonez,
 25 I con not hit restore.'³⁴

1 tool, weapon

2 force

3 aloft

4 threatened

5 as if

6 straight

7 aimed

8 would have

9 he who

10 axe

11 looked

12 its passage (?)

13 destroy

14 man

15 slant

16 bright (blade)

17 brave

18 trembled

19 host

20 fear

21 before thou art much hurt

22 could

23 flinched

24 fled

25 didst aim

26 raised

27 objection

28 genitive case

29 flew

30 seized

31 I ought to

32 dodged

33 though

34 (as the Green K

Bot busk,¹ burne,² bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt,
Dele to me my destine, and do hit out of honde,
For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start³ no more,
Til þyn ax have me hitte — haf here my trawþe.'

'Haf at þe þenne,' quoth þat oþer, and heves hit alofte,
And waytez⁴ as wroþely as he wode were;

He myntez⁵ at hym maȝtyly,⁶ bot not þe mon ryvez,⁷
Withhelde heterly⁸ h[is] honde, er hit hurt myȝt.

Gawayn grayþely⁹ hit bydez, and glent¹⁰ with no membre,
Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oþer¹¹ a stubbe auþer,¹²

þat rapeled¹³ is in roche¹⁴ grounde, with rotez a hundreth.
þen muryly efte con¹⁵ he mele,¹⁶ þe mon in þe grene:

'So now þou hatz þi hert holle,¹⁷ hitte me bihov[e]s;

Halde þe now þe hyȝe¹⁸ hode¹⁹ þat Arþur þe raȝt,²⁰

And kepe²¹ þy kanel²² at þis kest,²³ ȝif hit²⁴ kever²⁵ may.'

Gawayn ful gryndelly²⁶ with greme²⁷ þenne sayde,

'Wy þresch on, þou þro²⁸ mon, þou þretez to longe,

I hope²⁹ þat þi hert arȝe³⁰ wyth þyn awen selven.'

'Forsoþe,' quoth þat oþer freke,³¹ 'so felly³² þou spekez,

I wyl no lenger on lyte³³ lette³⁴ þin ernde³⁵

Riȝte nowe.'

þenne tas³⁶ he hym stryþe³⁷ to stryke,

And frounses³⁸ boþe lyppe and browe.

No mervayle þaȝ hym³⁹ myslyke,

þat hoped of no rescowe.⁴⁰

¹ make ready

² man

³ flinch

⁴ attends

⁵ aims

⁶ lustily

⁷ gashes

⁸ with a jerk

⁹ duly

¹⁰ shrank

¹¹ or

¹² either

¹³ twisted

¹⁴ rocky

¹⁵ did

¹⁶ speak

¹⁷ whole

¹⁸ high

¹⁹ hood

²⁰ gave (reached)

²¹ guard

²² neck

²³ blow

²⁴ the hood

²⁵ cover (the neck)

²⁶ roughly

²⁷ anger

²⁸ fierce

²⁹ suspect

³⁰ grows cowardly

³¹ man

³² rudely

³³ tarrying

³⁴ delay

³⁵ business

³⁶ takes

³⁷ stride (firm position on his feet)

³⁸ wrinkles

³⁹ Gawain

⁴⁰ rescue

He lyftes lygtly his lome,¹ and let hit down fayre,²
 With þe barbe of þe bitte³ bi þe bare nek;
 Þag he homered⁴ heterly,⁵ hurt hym no more,
 Bot snyrt⁶ hym on þat on syde, þat severed þe hyde;
 Þe scharp⁷ schrank⁸ to þe flesche þurȝ þe schyre⁹ grece,¹⁰
 Þat þe schene¹¹ blod over his schulderes schot to þe erþe;
 And quen þe burne sez þe blode blenk¹² on þe snawe,
 He sprit¹³ forth spenne-fote,¹⁴ more þen a spere lenþe,
 Hent¹⁵ heterly⁵ his helme, and on his hed cast,
 Schot¹⁶ with his schulderes his fayre schelde under,
 Braydez¹⁷ out a bryȝt sworde, and bremely¹⁸ he spekez;
 Never syn þat he watz burne borne of his moder,
 Watz he never in þis worlde wyȝe¹⁹ half so blyþe²⁰;
 ' Blynne,²¹ burne, of þy bur,²² bede²³ me no mo;
 I haf a stroke in þis sted withoute stryf hent,²⁴
 And if þow rechez²⁵ me any mo, I redyly schal quyte,²⁶
 And ȝelde ȝederly²⁷ aȝayn, and þerto ȝe tryst,²⁸
 And foo²⁹;

Bot on stroke here me fallez,³⁰
 Þe covenant schap³¹ ryȝt soo,
 [Sikered]³² in Arpurez hallez,
 And þerfore hende now hoo³³!

The hapel³⁴ heldet³⁵ hym fro, and on his ax rested,
 Sette þe schaft upon schore,³⁶ and to þe scharp lened,
 And loked to þe leude³⁷ þat on þe launde³⁸ ȝede,
 How þat dogty dredles dervely³⁹ þer stondez,

1 weapon
 2 full
 3 blade
 4 smote
 5 swiftly
 6 wounded (?)
 7 axe
 8 pierced
 9 bright
 10 grease (fleshy part of the neck)
 11 bright
 12 shine
 13 started

14 swift-foot (?)
 15 grasped
 16 slipped
 17 draws
 18 boldly
 19 man
 20 glad
 21 stop
 22 onslaught
 23 attempt
 24 accepted
 25 dealest (handest me out)
 26 requite, retaliate

27 promptly
 28 make up your
 29 (?)
 30 is due
 31 directed
 32 ratified
 33 stop
 34 knight
 35 turned away
 36 earth
 37 man
 38 plain
 39 bravely

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Armed ful aȝlez¹; in hert hit hym lykez.
 Penn he meleȝ muryly, wyth a much steven,²
 And wyth a r[a]lykande³ rurde⁴ he to þe renk⁵ sayde
 'Bolde burne,⁶ on þis bent⁷ be not so gryndel⁸;
 No mon here unmanerly þe mysboden⁹ hadde,
 Ne kyȝ,¹⁰ bot as covenaunde,¹¹ at kynges kort¹² schaped¹³;
 I hyȝt¹⁴ þe a strok, and þou hit hatz; halde þe wel payed;
 I relece þe of þe remnaunt, of ryȝtes alle oȝer;
 Ȝif I deliver¹⁵ had bene, a boffet, paraunter,
 I couȝe wroȝeloker¹⁶ haf waret,¹⁷ [and] to þe haf wroȝt anger.
 Fyrst I mansed¹⁸ þe muryly, with a mynt¹⁹ one,²⁰
 And rove²¹ þe wyth no rof,²² sore²³ with ryȝt I þe profered,
 For þe forwarde þat we fest²⁴ in þe fyrst nyȝt,
 And þou trystly þe trawȝe and trwly me haldez,
 Al þe gayne þow me gef, as god mon schulde;
 þat oȝer munt²⁵ for þe morne, mon,²⁶ I þe profered,
 þou kyssedes my clere²⁷ wyf, þe cossez²⁸ me raztez,²⁹
 For boȝe two here³⁰ I þe bede bot two bare myntes,
 Bouȝe scape³¹;

Trwe mon³² trwe restore,
 Penne þar mon³² drede no waȝe³³;
 At þe þrid þou fayled þore,³⁴
 And þerfor þat tappe³⁵ ta þe.³⁵

20

For hit is my weȝe³⁷ þat þou wereȝ, þat ilke woven girdel,
 Myn owen wyf hit þe weȝed, I wot wel forsoȝe;
 Now know I wel þy cosses, and þy costes³⁸ als,³⁹

25

1 fearless
 2 great voice
 3 rushing, loud
 4 sound
 5 knight
 6 man
 7 field
 8 fierce, angry
 9 offered wrong
 10 treated
 11 agreed upon
 12 court
 13 arranged

14 promised
 15 nimble
 16 more fiercely
 17 dealt
 18 menaced
 19 aimed blow
 20 only
 21 cleaved
 22 cut, blow
 23 wound
 24 pledged
 25 aimed blow
 26 man

27 fair
 28 kisses
 29 gavest
 30 both of these two
 31 without injury
 32 must
 33 danger, injury
 34 there
 35 stroke
 36 take to thyself
 37 garment
 38 qualities
 39 also

And þe wowyng of my wyf, I wroȝt it myselven;
 I sende¹ hir to asay² þe, and, sothly me þynkkez,
 On³ þe fautlest⁴ freke þat ever on fote ȝede⁵;
 As perle bi⁶ þe quite⁷ pese⁸ is of prys more,
 So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oþer gay knyȝtez.
 Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, syr, and lewte⁹ yow wonted,¹⁰
 Bot þat watz for no wylyde¹¹ werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
 Bot for ȝe lufud your lyf, — þe lasse I yow blamé.
 Þat oþer stif¹² mon in study stod a gret whyle;
 So agreved for greme¹³ he gried¹⁴ withinne,
 Alle þe blode of his brest blende¹⁵ in his face,
 Þat al he schrank for schome, þat¹⁶ þe schalk talked.
 Þe forme¹⁷ worde upon folde¹⁸ þat þe freke meled:
 'Corsed worth¹⁹ cowarddyse and covetyse boþe!
 In yow is vylany and vyse, þat vertue disstryez.'
 Þenne he kaȝt to²⁰ þe knot, and þe kest²¹ lawsez,²²
 Brayde²³ broþely²⁴ þe belt to þe burne selven:
 'Lo! þer þe falssyng,²⁵ foule mot hit falle!²⁶
 For care²⁷ of þy knokke, cowardyse me taȝt
 To acorde me with covetyse, my kynde²⁸ to forsake,
 Þat is larges²⁹ and lewte, þat longez to³⁰ knyȝtez.
 Now am I fawty,³¹ and falce, and ferde³² haf been ever;
 Of trecherye and untrawþe boþe bityde³³ sorȝe³⁴

And care!

I biknowe yow,³⁵ knyȝt, here styлле,
 Al fawty is my fare³⁶;

1 sent

2 try, tempt

3 one

4 the most faultless

5 went (OE. *ēode*)

6 compared with

7 white

8 peas

9 loyalty

10 lacked

11 wily, intriguing

12 brave

13 vexation, anger

14 was agitated

15 blent, mingled

16 while

17 first

18 earth

19 be

20 seized hold of

21 twist

22 looses

23 threw

24 angrily

25 falsity

26 may foul befall

27 fear

28 nature

29 generosity

30 befits

31 faulty

32 afearred

33 come

34 sorrow

35 confess to you

36 conduct

R GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Letez me overtake¹ your wylle,
And este² I schal beware.'

Thenn loze³ þat oper leude, and luflyly⁴ sayde,
'I halde hit hardily⁵ hole,⁶ þe harme þat I hade;
þou art confessed so clene, beknowen of þy mysses,⁷
And hatz þe penaunce apert,⁸ of⁹ þe poynt of myn egge,¹⁰
I halde þe polysed¹¹ of þat plygt,¹² and pured¹³ as clene,
As¹⁴ þou hadez never forfeited¹⁵ syþen þou watz fyrst borne.
And I gif þe, syr, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;
For hit is grene as my goune, syr Gawayn, ge maye
þenk upon þis ilke prepe,¹⁶ þer¹⁷ þou forth pryngesz¹⁸
Among prynces of prys, and¹⁹ þis a pure token
Of þe chaunce²⁰ of þe grene chapel, at²¹ chevalrous knygtez;
And ge schal in þis nwe ger agayn²² to my wonez,²³
And we schyn²⁴ revel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,
Ful bene.'²⁵

þer laped²⁶ hym fast²⁷ þe lorde,
And sayde: 'With my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,²⁸
þat watz your enemy kene.'

'Nay, forsoþe,' quoth þe segge,²⁹ and sesed³⁰ hys helme,
And hatz hit of³¹ hendely,³² and þe hapel³³ ponkkez:
'I haf sojourned sadly, sele³⁴ yow bytyde,
And He zelde³⁵ hit zow zare,³⁶ þat zarkkez³⁷ al menskes³⁸!

1 understand
2 afterwards
3 laughed
4 courteously
5 assuredly
6 cured
7 with avowal made of thy sins
8 openly, manifestly
9 from
10 (edge of) axe
11 absolved
12 offense
13 purged

14 as if
15 sinned
16 reproof, rebuke
17 when
18 dost crowd, press
19 and keep
20 adventure
21 on the part of
22 come again
23 dwelling
24 shall
25 genially
26 invited

27 urgently
28 bring into friendly relations
29 knight
30 seized
31 off
32 courteously
33 warrior
34 blessing, prosperity
35 may he reward you for it
36 soon
37 bestows
38 honors

And þe wowyng of my wyf, I wroȝt it myselven;
 I sende¹ hir to asay² þe, and, sothly me þynkkez,
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 As perle bi⁶ þe quite⁷ pesc⁸ is of prys more,
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 Bot þat watz for no wylyde¹¹ werke, ne wowyng nauþer,
 Bot for ȝe lufud your lyf, — þe lasse I yow blame.
 Þat oþer stif¹² mon in study stod a gret whyle;
 10 So agreved for greme¹³ he gried¹⁴ withinne,
 Alle þe blode of his brest blende¹⁵ in his face,
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 20 To acorde me with covetyse, my kynde²⁸ to forsake,
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 Of trecherye and untrawþe boþe bityde³³ sorȝe³⁴

And care!

25 I biknowe yow,³⁵ knyȝt, here styлле,
 Al fawty is my fare³⁶;

1 sent
 2 try, tempt
 3 one
 4 the most faultless
 5 went (OE. *zode*)
 6 compared with
 7 white
 8 peas
 9 loyalty
 10 lacked
 11 wily, intriguing
 12 brave

13 vexation, anger
 14 was agitated
 15 blent, mingled
 16 while
 17 first
 18 earth
 19 be
 20 seized hold of
 21 twist
 22 looses
 23 threw
 24 angrily

25 falsity
 26 may foul befall it
 27 fear
 28 nature
 29 generosity
 30 befits
 31 faulty
 32 afearred
 33 come
 34 sorrow
 35 confess to you
 36 conduct

Letez me overtake¹ your wylle,
And este² I schal beware.'

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þou art confessed so clene, beknowen of þy mysses,⁷
And hatz þe penaunce apert,⁸ of⁹ þe poynt of myn egge,¹⁰
I halde þe polysed¹¹ of þat plyȝt,¹² and pured¹³ as clene,
As¹⁴ þou hadez never forfeited¹⁵ syþen þou watz fyrst borne.
And I gif þe, syr, þe gurdel þat is golde hemmed;
For hit is grene as my goune, syr Gawayn, ȝe maye
þenk upon þis ilke þrepe,¹⁶ þer¹⁷ þou forth þryngez¹⁸
Among prynces of prys, and¹⁹ þis a pure token
Of þe chaunce²⁰ of þe grene chapel, at²¹ chevalrous knyȝtez
And ȝe schal in þis nwe ȝer aȝayn²² to my wonez,²³
And we schyn²⁴ revel þe remnaunt of þis ryche fest,

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þer laped²⁶ hym fast²⁷ þe lorde,
And sayde: 'With my wyf, I wene,
We schal yow wel acorde,²⁸
þat watz your enmy kene.'

'Nay, forsoþe,' quoth þe segge,²⁹ and sesed³⁰ hys helme,
And hatz hit of³¹ hendely,³² and þe hapel³³ þonkkez:

'I haf sojourned sadly, sele³⁴ yow bytyde,

And He ȝelde³⁵ hit ȝow ȝare,³⁶ þat ȝarkkez³⁷ al menskes³⁸!

¹ understand

² afterwards

³ laughed

⁴ courteously

⁵ assuredly

⁶ cured

⁷ with avowal made of thy sins

⁸ openly, manifestly

⁹ from

¹⁰ (edge of) axe

¹¹ absolved

¹² offense

¹³ purged

¹⁴ as if

¹⁵ sinned

¹⁶ reproof, rebuke

¹⁷ when

¹⁸ dost crowd, press

¹⁹ and keep

²⁰ adventure

²¹ on the part of

²² come again

²³ dwelling

²⁴ shall

²⁵ genially

²⁶ invited

²⁷ urgently

²⁸ bring into friendly rela

²⁹ knight

³⁰ seized

³¹ off

³² courteously

³³ warrior

³⁴ blessing, prosperity

³⁵ may he reward you for

³⁶ soon

³⁷ bestows

³⁸ honors

- And comaundez¹ me to þat cortays, your comlych² fere,³
 Boþe þat on and þat oþer, myn honoured ladycz,
 þat þus hor knygt wyth hor kest⁴ han koyntly⁵ bigyled.
 Bot hit is no ferly,⁶ þaȝ a fole madde,⁷
- 5 And þurȝ wyles of wymmen be wonen to sorge;
 For so watz Adam in erde⁸ with one bygyled,
 And Salamon with fele sere,⁹ and Samson eftsonez,¹⁰
 Dalyda¹¹ dalt¹² hym hys wyrde,¹³ and Davyth þerafter
 Watz blended¹⁴ with Barsabe,¹⁵ þat much bale¹⁶ þoled.¹⁷
- 10 Now þese were wrathed¹⁸ wyth her wyles, hit were a wynne¹⁹ huge
 To luf hom wel, and leve²⁰ hem not — a leude þat couþe²¹ —
 For þes wer forne²² þe freest²³ þat folȝed alle þe sele,
 Excellently of alle þyse oþer²⁴ under hevenryche
 þat mused²⁵;
- 15 And alle þay were biwyled,²⁶
 With wymmen þat þay used²⁷;
 þaȝ I be now bigyled,
 Me þink me burde²⁸ be excused.'
- ' Bot your gordel,' quoth Gawayn — ' God yow forȝelde²⁹! —
 20 þat wyl I welde³⁰ wyth good wylle, not for þe wynne³¹ golde,
 Ne þe saynt,³² ne þe sylk, ne þe syde³³ pendaundes,³⁴
 For wele,³⁵ ne for worchyp, ne for þe wlonk³⁶ werkkez,
 Bot in syngne of my surfet³⁷ I schal se hit ofte;
 When I ride in renoun, remorde³⁸ to myselven
 25 þe faut and þe fayntyse³⁹ of þe flesche crabbed,⁴⁰
- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 commend | 15 Bathsheba | 29 requite |
| 2 comely | 16 grief | 30 keep in possession |
| 3 mate | 17 suffered | 31 goodly (?) |
| 4 stratagem | 18 vexed | 32 samite |
| 5 cunningly | 19 joy | 33 long |
| 6 wonder | 20 believe | 34 pendants |
| 7 grew mad | 21 were a man but able | 35 good fortune |
| 8 on earth | 22 of old | 36 beautiful |
| 9 many different ones | 23 noblest | 37 fault, sin |
| 10 moreover, likewise | 24 beyond (excelling) all others | 38 I shall blame |
| 11 Delilah | 25 indulged their fancies (?) | 39 faintness, weakness |
| 12 dealt | 26 beguiled | 40 perverse (?) |
| 13 fate, doom | 27 dealt with | |
| 14 mingled, wedded | 28 it is fitting for me | |

How tender¹ hit is to entyse² teches³ of fylpe⁴;
 And þus, quen⁵ pryde schal me pryk, for prowes of armes,
 þe loke to⁶ þis luf⁷ lace schal lepe⁸ my hert.
 Bot on⁹ I wolde yow pray, displeses¹⁰ yow never;
 Syn¹¹ ge be lorde of the zonder londe, þer I haf lent¹² inne. 5
 Wyth yow wyth worschyp — þe Wyȝe¹³ hit yow zelde
 þat uphaldez þe heven, and on hyȝ¹⁴ sittez! —
 How norne¹⁵ ge yowre ryȝt nome, and þenne no more?
 'þat schal I telle þe trwly,' quoth þat oper þenne,
 'Bernlak de Hautdesert I hat¹⁶ in þis londe, 10
 þurȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye (þat in my hous lenges)¹⁷
 And koyntyse¹⁸ of clergye¹⁹ bi craftes wel lerned,
 þe maystres of Merlyn mony hatz²⁰ taken;
 For ho hatz dalt drwry²¹ ful dere sum tyme
 With þat conable²² klerk þat knowes alle your knyȝtez 15
 At hame;

Morgne þe goddes,
 þerfore hit is hir name;
 Weldez²³ non so hyȝe hawtesse,²⁴
 þat ho ne con make ful tame.²⁵ 20

Ho wayned²⁶ me upon þis wyse to your wynne²⁷ halle,
 For to assay þe surquidre,²⁸ gif hit soth were,
 þat rennes²⁹ of þe grete renoun of þe Rounde Table;
 Ho wayned me, þis wonder, your wyttez to reve,³⁰
 For to haf greved Gaynour,³¹ and gart hir to dyȝe,³² 25
 With gopnyng³³ of þat ilke gomen,³⁴ þat gostlych speked,
 With his hede in his honde, bifore þe hyȝe table.

1 frail, weak
 2 acquire, catch
 3 spots, stains, blemishes
 4 foulness, sin
 5 when
 6 at
 7 dear, precious
 8 soften
 9 one thing
 10 if it displease
 11 since
 12 dwelt

13 Being
 14 high
 15 say
 16 am called
 17 dwells
 18 (her) cunning
 19 learning
 20 MS. ho
 21 carried on amours
 22 competent
 23 possesses
 24 dignity, power

25 submissive
 26 sent
 27 goodly (?)
 28 pride
 29 runs, is told
 30 take away
 31 Guinevere
 32 die
 33 fear
 34 laughing-stock

þat is ho þat is at home, þe auncian¹ lady;
 Ho is even þyn aunt, Arpurez half suster,
 þe duches doȝter of Tyntagelle,² þat dere³ Uter⁴ after
 Hade Arpur upon,⁵ þat apel⁶ is nowþe.⁷

þerfore I epe⁸ þe, hapel, to com to þyn aunt,
 Make myry in my hous, my meny þe lovies,
 And I wol⁹ þe as wel, wyȝe, bi my faythe,
 As any gome under God, for þy grete troupe.⁹
 And he nikked hym naye,¹⁰ he nolde bi no wayes.

þay acolen¹¹ and kyssen, [bikennen] ayþer oþer¹²
 To þe Prynce of Paradise, and parten ryȝt þere,
 On coolde¹³;

Gawayn on blonk¹⁴ ful bene,
 To þe kynggez burg¹⁵ buskez¹⁶ bolde,
 And þe knyȝt in þe enker¹⁷ grene,
 Whiderwarde so ever he wolde.

THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE

There was a Thomas Rimor (Rymour) of Erceldoune (modern Earlstoun) in the thirteenth century, a Scotchman who obtained in the following century the reputation of a prophet. He cannot, however, have been the author of our romance, which must have been composed after 1401, and is assigned by the *New English Dictionary* to about 1425. The romance consists of three cantos of which the first is devoted to the fairy tale here following, and the second and third to prophecies, or what purport to be such. Child thought that the prophecies were by an inferior hand, but Murray believes the whole romance to have been the work of a single poet. Curiously enough, the story is told partly in the first person, and partly in the third.

A ballad, founded on the romance (see Murray's edition, pp. lii, liii), No. 37 of Child's collection, of which the first stanza runs in one version:

True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
 And he beheld a ladie gay,
 A ladie that was brisk and bold,
 Come riding oer the fernie brae.

¹ ancient

² the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel

³ noble

⁴ Uther

⁵ by

⁶ noble

⁷ now

⁸ ask, bid

⁹ wish

¹⁰ refused him

¹¹ embrace

¹² commend each the other

¹³ in the open (?)

¹⁴ steed (*lit.* white steed)

¹⁵ fortress

¹⁶ hastens

¹⁷ dark (inky) green

Thomas still retains his power over the imaginations of men. Professor Dixon, of the University of Glasgow, has written a little play, called *Thomas the Rhymer* (Glasgow, 1911), and Kipling's *Last Rhyme of True Thomas* (1893) is one of his most spirited poems.

The scene of the poem is best described by Sir James Murray (pp. 1, li of his edition): 'Eildon Tree, referred to in the Romance, and connected traditionally with Thomas's prophecies, stood on the declivity of the eastern of the three Eildon Hills. . . . Its site is believed to be indicated by the *Eildon Stone*, "a rugged boulder of whinstone" standing on the edge of the road from Melrose to St Boswell's, about a mile south-east from the former town, and on the ridge of a spur of the hill. "The view from this point," says a correspondent, "is unsurpassed; on the north you have the vale of Leader almost up to Earlstoun, and Cowdenknowes with its 'Black Hill' rising abruptly from the bed of the stream; while downward to Tweed the undulating expanse of woody bank is so beautiful, that in the time of the 'bonny broom,' I am often tempted to bend my steps to the spot, and 'lie and watch the sight,' from a spot once 'underneath the Eildon Tree.' In the close vicinity is the 'Bogle Burn,' a stream which rises on the slope of the Eastern Eildon, and flows down a deep glen into the Tweed a little to the north of Newtown St Boswell's." . . . About half a mile to the west of the Eildon Stone, and on the slope of the same hill, we find the "Huntlee bankis" of the old romance. The spot lies a little above the North British Railway, at the point where it is crossed by the road to St Boswell's already referred to, about a quarter of a mile after leaving Melrose Station. The field next the road and railway at this point (No. 2405 on the Ordnance Map) is called *Monks' Meadow*; and higher up the hill above this are two fields (Nos. 2548 and 2408) which have preserved the name of Huntlee Brae.'

The Ordnance map in question is that of the Parish of Melrose (May, 1861), Sheet VIII. 5. The road leaves the market-place, and leads to Oakendean House; it touches a corner of 2405 just after it crosses the railway and strikes a little southeast. No. 2408 is directly south of 2405, about 120 yards from the road, by way of a row of trees. No. 2548 is directly south of 2408, and about 150 yards further. Directly east of 2548 is Corse Rig (2410), with a plantation of trees.

Sir Walter Scott's enthusiasm for the story is best shown by a passage or two from Basil Hall's journal for Dec. 30, 1824, as quoted in Lockhart's life of Scott: 'This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. . . . Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly Burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rhymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that

by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant. . . . In the evening, . . . Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, . . . the famous poem on *Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies*; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical—his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly Burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening. On Scott's transfer of his supposititious 'Rhymer's Glen' to the Abbotsford estate, see Murray's edition, p. lii.

The complete romance exists in four manuscripts, of which the oldest and best, the Thornton MS. of Lincoln Cathedral, dates from 1430–1440. All were admirably edited by Dr. Murray in 1875 for the Early English Text Society (No. 61). Another edition, with a reconstructed text, is that by Professor Brandl (Berlin, 1880), with copious variants. The present text reposes upon the Thornton manuscript, as printed by Murray, but the spelling has been somewhat normalized, and an attempt has been made to eliminate certain manifest errors; this, therefore, is a restored text, and can not be depended upon for the exact manuscript readings. The editions of Murray and Brandl can be relied upon for detailed information upon all matters of interest.

Als I me¹ went þis endres² day,
Full fast in mynd makand my mone,
In a mery mornynge of May,
By Huntlee bankes myself allone,

5 I herd þe jay and þe prostell³;
The mavys⁴ menyde hir⁵ in hir song;
þe wodewale⁶ beryde⁷ als⁸ a bell,
That all þe wode abowt me rong.

10 Allone in longyng als I lay,
Undyrneth a semely tree,
Saw I whare a lady gay
Came ridand over a luffly lee.⁹

¹ by myself
² other
³ throstle
⁴ song-thrush

⁵ bemoaned herself
⁶ wood-lark (Murray); according to others, the yaffle, or green wood-pecker

If I solde sytt to Domesday,
 With my tonge to wrobbe and wrye,¹
 Certanely þat lady gay
 Never bese scho discryved² for mee.

Hir palfray was a dappill-gray —
 Swylk one ne sagh³ I never none.
 Als dose þe sonne on someres day,
 þat faire lady hirself scho schone.

Hir selle⁴ it was of roell bone⁵ —
 Semely was þat syght to see! —
 Stefly sett with precyous stone,
 And compast all with crapotee,⁶

With stones of Oryent, grete plente.
 Hir hare about hir hede it hang.
 Scho rade over þat lufly lee;
 A⁷ whyl scho blew, anoper scho sang.

Hir garthes⁸ of nobyll sylk þay were,
 The bukylls were of berel⁹ stone;
 Hir steraps were of crystal clere,
 And all with perel¹⁰ over bygone.¹¹

Hir payetrel¹² was of irale¹³ fyne;
 Hir cropour was of orphare¹⁴;
 Hir brydill was of golde fyne —
 One aythir syde hang¹⁵ bellys three.

¹ The meaning of these two verbs is very doubtful

² shall she be described

³ saw

⁴ saddle

⁵ ivory (see *NED.* s.v. *ruel-bone*)

⁶ toadstone (cf. Shakespeare, *A.Y.L.* 2. 1. 13)

⁷ one

⁸ girths

⁹ beryl

¹⁰ pearl

¹¹ covered

¹² horse's breastplate

¹³ (?)

¹⁴ orphrey, rich embroidery (esp. of gold)

¹⁵ hung

Scho led thre grewehundis¹ in a lesse,²
 And seven raches³ by hir ron;
 Scho bare an horn abowt hir halse,⁴
 And undir hir belt full many a flon.⁵

5 Thomas lay and saw þat syght,
 Undirnethe ane semely tree.
 He sayd: 'Ȝon⁶ es Mary, most of myght,
 þat bare þat Child þat dyede for mee.

10 'Bot-if⁷ I speke with ȝon lady bryght,
 I hope⁸ myn herte will bryst⁹ in three;
 Now sall I go with all my myght,
 Hir for to mete at Eldoun tree.'

15 Thomas rathely¹⁰ up he rase,
 And ran over þat mountayn hye;
 Gyff¹¹ it be als þe story says,
 He hir mette at Eldon tree.

He knelyde down appon his knee,
 Undirnethe þat grenwode spray:
 20 'Lufly lady, rewe¹² on me,
 Qwene of heven, als¹³ þou wel may!'

Than spake þat lady milde of thought:
 'Thomas, late swylke wordes be!
 Qwene of heven ne am I noght,
 For I tuke¹⁴ never so hegh degre;

25 Bote I am of anoþer countree,
 If¹⁵ I be payreld¹⁶ most of pryse.¹⁷
 I ryde aftyr this wylde fee¹⁸;
 My raches rynnys at my devyse.¹⁹'

¹ greyhounds

² leash

³ hunting-dogs (hounds that follow by the scent, as the greyhound does by sight; so Murray)

⁴ neck

⁵ arrow

⁶ yon

⁷ unless

⁸ believe

⁹ burst

¹⁰ quickly

¹¹ if

¹² have pity

¹³ a

¹⁴ to

¹⁵ e

¹⁶ a

¹⁷ p

¹⁸ g

¹⁹ c

' If þou be pareld most of pryse,
And rydis here in thy foly,
Of lufe, lady, als þou erte wyse,¹
þou gyffe me leve to lye the by l'

Scho sayde: ' þou man, þat ware foly.
I praye þe, Thomas, late me bee;
For I saye þe full sekirly,²
þat synn wolde fordoo³ all my beaute.'

' Luffly lady, rewe on mee,
And I will evermore with the duelle;
Here my trouth I plyght to the,
Whethir þou will in heven or helle.'

' Man of molde, þou will me merre,⁴
Bot ȝit þou sall hafe all thy will;
Bot trowe þou wele, þou chevys⁵ þe werre,⁶
For alle my beaute þou will spyll.'

Down þan lyghte þat lady bryght,
Undirnethe þat grenewode spray;
And, als þe story tellis full ryght,
Seven sythis⁷ by hir he lay.

Scho sayd: ' Man, the lykes thy play;
What byrd⁸ in boure⁹ may dele¹⁰ with the?
Thou merrys me all þis longe day;
I pray the, Thomas, late me bee!'

Thomas stod up in þat stede,¹¹
And he byheld þat lady gay:
Hir hare it hang all over hir hede,
Hir eghne semede out, þat were so gray,

¹ wise (Murray says that *wise* and *pryse*
are pronounced as if *twice* and *frice*)
² surely
³ destroy

⁴ mar
⁵ succeedest, thrives
⁶ worse
⁷ times

⁸ woman
⁹ bower
¹⁰ deal
¹¹ stead, place

And all the rich clopyng was away,
þat he byfore saw in þat stede;
Hir a ¹ schanke ² blake, hir oþer gray,
And all hir body lyke þe lede.³

þan said Thomas: 'Allas, alas!
In fayth, þis es a dullfull ⁴ syght!
How art þou fadyd in þe face,
þat schan byfore als þe sonne so bryght!'

Sche sayd: 'Thomas, take leve at sonne and
And als ⁵ at lefe þat grewes on tree;
This twelmonth sall þou with me gone,⁶
And medill-erthe ⁷ sall þou not see.'

'Allas,' he sayd, 'and wa es mee!
I trowe my dedis wyll wirk me care.
My saule, Jesu, byteche ⁸ I the,
Whedirsomever my banes sall fare.'

Scho ledde hym in at Eldone Hill,
Undirnethe a derne ⁹ lee,
Whare it was dirk als mydnyght myrk,¹⁰
And ever þe water till his knee.

The montenans ¹¹ of dayes three,
He herd bot swoghyng ¹² of þe flode;
At þe laste he sayd: 'Full wa ¹³ es mee!
Almast I dye for fawte ¹⁴ of fode.'

¹ one

² leg

³ lead

⁴ doleful

⁵ also

⁶ go

⁷ middle earth

⁸ commit

⁹ secret

¹⁰ murk, murky

¹¹ amount,

¹² roaring

¹³ woe

¹⁴ lack

Scho lede hym intill a faire herbere,¹
 Whare frute was growand gret plentee;
 Pere and appill both rype þay were,
 The date, and als the damasec²;

þe fygge, and also þe wyneberye³;
 The nyghtgales byggande⁴ on þair nest,
 þe papejoyes⁵ fast abowt gan⁶ flye,
 And throstylls sang — wolde hafe no rest.

He pressede to pull frute with his hand,
 Als man⁷ for fude⁸ þat was nere faynt.
 Scho sayd: 'Thomas, þou late þam stand,
 Or ells þe fende the will atteynt.

If þou it plok, sothely to say,
 Thi saule gose to þe fyr of helle;
 It commes never owte or⁹ Domesday,
 Bot þer in payne ay for to duelle.

Thomas, sothely I the hyght¹⁰:
 Come lygg thyn hede down on my knee,
 And þou sall se þe fayrest syght
 þat ever saw man of thi contree.'

He did in hye¹¹ als scho hym badde:
 Appon hir knee his hede he layd,
 For hir to paye¹² he was full glade;
 And þan þat lady to him sayd:

'Seese þou now ȝon faire way,
 þat lygges over ȝon hegh mountayn?
 Ȝone es þe waye to heven for ay,
 When synfull sawles are passede þer payn.

¹ garden, orchard² damson³ grape⁴ dwelling⁵ parrots⁶ did⁷ a man⁸ food⁹ ere¹⁰ bid¹¹ haste¹² please

Seese þou now ȝon oþer way,
þat lygges lawe¹ bynehe ȝon ryse²?
Ȝon es þe way, þe sothe to say,
Unto þe joye of Paradyse.

Seese þou ȝitt ȝon thirde way,
þat ligges undir ȝon grene playn?
Ȝone es þe way, with tene³ and tray⁴
Whare synfull saulis suffirris pair payn.

Bot seese þou now ȝone ferthe way,
þat lygges over ȝon depe delle?
Ȝone es þe way — so waylaway! —
Unto þe birnand fyr of helle.

Seese þou ȝitt ȝone faire castell,
þat standis over ȝon heghe hill?
Of towne and towre it beris þe bell⁵;
In erthe es none lyke þertill.

Forsothe, Thomas, ȝone es myn awen
And þe kynges⁶ of this countree;
Bot me ware lever⁷ be hanged and drawen,
Or⁸ þat he wyste þou laye by me.

When þou commes to ȝone castell gay,
I pray þe curtase man to bee;
And whatso any man to þe say,
Luke þou answeare none bot mee.

My lorde es servede at ylk⁹ a messe¹⁰
With thritty knyghtis faire and free;
I sall say, syttand at the desse,¹¹
I tuke thi speche byȝonde the see.'

¹ low
² spray
³ grief

⁴ affliction
⁵ excels
⁶ king's

⁷ I had rather
⁸ ere
⁹ each

Thomas still als stane he stude,
 And byheld þat lady gay;
 Scho was agayn als¹ faire and gude,
 And also¹ ryche on hir palfray;

Hir grewehundis fillide² with dere blode,
 Hir raches couplede, by my fay³;
 Scho blew hir horn with mayn⁴ and mode,⁵
 And to þe castell scho tuke þe way.

Into þe hall sothely scho went;
 Thomas foloued at hir hand.
 Than ladyes come, both faire and gent,⁶
 With curtasye to hir kneland.

Harpe and fethill⁷ both þay fand,
 Þe getern,⁸ and also þe sawtrye,⁹
 Lute and rybybe¹⁰ bothe gangand,
 And all manere of mynstralsye.

Þe moste mervelle þat Thomas thoghte
 When þat he stode appon þe flore —
 Fefty hertis in were broghte,
 Þat were bothe grete and store.¹¹

Raches lay lapand in þe blode;
 Cokes come with dryssyng-knyfe¹²;
 Thay bryttened¹³ þe dere als¹⁴ þey were wode¹⁵;
 Revell amanges þam was full ryfe.

Knyghtis dawnsede by three and three;
 There was revell, gamen, and playe;
 Luffly ladyes faire and free
 Satt and sang in riche araye.

¹ as
² (were) filled
³ faith
⁴ might
⁵ spirit

⁶ well bred
⁷ fiddle
⁸ gittern (a kind of guitar)
⁹ psaltery (a kind of zither)
¹⁰ rebeck (a three-stringed fiddle)

¹¹ mighty
¹² dressing-knife
¹³ cut up
¹⁴ as if
¹⁵ mad

More¹ þan I ȝow saye, parde,²
Till on a day — so hafe I grace! —
My lufly lady sayd to mee :

5 ' Buske³ the, Thomas, þe buse⁴ agayn,
For here þou may no lengar be ;
Hye⁵ the faste with myght and mayn ;
I sall the bryng till Eldone tree.'

10 Thomas sayd þan with hevy chere :
' Lufly lady, now late me bee,
For certaynly I hafe bene here
Noght bot þe space of dayes three.'

15 ' Forsothe, Thomas, als I þe tell,
þou hafe bene here thre ȝere and more,
And langer here þou may noght duell ;
The skylle⁶ I sall þe tell wharefore :

20 To-morne of helle þe foule fende
Amang this folk will feche his fee ;
And þou art mekill⁷ man and hende⁸ —
I trow full wele he wil chese⁹ the.

For all þe gold þat ever may bee
Fro hethyn¹⁰ unto þe worldis ende,
þou bese¹¹ never betrayed for mee ;
þerefore with me I rede¹² thou wende.'

25 Scho broght hym agayn to Eldone tree,
Undirnethe þat grenewode spray. —
In Huntlee bankes es mery to bee,
Whare fowles synges both nyght and day.

¹ longer

² in truth (*Fr. par Dieu*)

³ prepare

⁴ behooves (to return)

⁵ haste

⁶ reason

⁷ large, robust

⁸ courtly

AMIS AND AMILOUN

Amis and Amiloun (late thirteenth century) is ultimately derived from a Greek or Oriental source. The story represents the mediæval notion of an ideal friendship, capable of attaining supreme heights of devotion. Amiloun risks his life to save the honor of Amis by maintaining his friend's perjured word in a trial by combat, and afterwards suffers for his generosity by becoming a leper. As an outcast and beggar, with only one young page as companion, he is at length recognized by Amis, and lovingly cared for and comforted. When an angel declares to Amis in a dream that only by means of the blood of his two children can Amiloun be cured, he meets even this demand upon his friendship and gratitude. Then a miracle takes place. Each friend has done what the other's need called for, and their sins are now fully atoned for by self-sacrifice. The two slaughtered children are found alive, happily playing together, and the story ends in cheer.

There are versions in Old French, Latin, Old Norse, and Celtic. The English romance is closely related to an Anglo-Norman poem printed by Kölbing, who has elaborately edited the English text (*Altenglische Bibliothek*, Vol. 2, Heilbronn, 1884), closely following the Auchinleck manuscript. The language is Northeast Midland. For a good outline, see Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 250-2.

Our extract covers lines 2245-2424.

þan þouȝt þe douk,¹ wipouten lesing,²

For to slen³ his childer so ȝing⁴

It were a dedli sinne;

And þan þouȝt he, bi heven⁵ King,

His broþer out of sorwe bring,⁶

5

For þat nold he nouȝt blinne.⁷

So it bifel on Cristes niȝt,

Swiche time as Jesu, ful of ȝing⁸,

Was born to save mankinne,⁸

To chirche to wende, al þat þer wes,⁹

10

þai digten¹⁰ hem, wipouten les,¹¹

Wip joie and worldes winne.¹²

¹ duke

² deception

³ slay

⁴ young

⁵ heaven's

⁶ to bring

⁷ to that end would he not cease
(his endeavors)

⁸ MS. -kunne

⁹ who were there

¹⁰ prepared

¹¹ to tell the truth

¹² delight

þan¹ þai were redi for to fare,²
 þe douke bad al þat þer ware,
 To chirche þai schuld wende,
 Litel and michel, lasse and mare,³
 5 þat non bileft⁴ in chaumber are,⁵
 As þai wald⁶ ben his frende⁷;
 And seyð he wald himselve þat nigt
 Kepe⁸ his broþer, þat gentil knigt,
 þat was so god and kende.⁹
 10 þan was þer non þat durst say nay:
 To chirche þai went in her¹⁰ way,
 At hom bileft þe¹¹ hende.¹²

þe douke wel¹³ fast gan asprie¹⁴
 þe kays of þe noricerie,¹⁵
 15 Erþan¹⁶ þai schuld gon;
 And priveliche¹⁷ he cast his eige,¹⁸
 And aparceived ful witterlye¹⁹
 Where þat þai hadde hem don.²⁰
 And when þai were to chirche went,²¹
 20 þan Sir Amis, verrament,²²
 Was bileft al on.²³
 He tok a candel fair and briȝt,
 And to þe kays he went ful riȝt,
 And tok hem oway ichon.²⁴

25 Alon himself, wiȝouten mo,²⁵
 Into þe chaumber he gan to go,
 þer þat his childer were,

¹ when

² go

³ greater

⁴ left

⁵ should be; MS. þare

⁶ would

⁷ friends

⁸ watch over

⁹ kind

¹⁰ their

¹¹ MS. þo

¹² they left the noble one

¹³ very

¹⁴ began to look for

¹⁵ nursery

¹⁶ before

¹⁷ secretly

¹⁸ eye

AMIS AND AMILOUN

And biheld hem boþe to,¹
 Hou fair þai lay togider þo,
 And slepe boþe yfere²;
 þan seyð himselve: ' Bi Seyn Jon,
 It were gret reweþe³ þou to slon,
 þat God haþ bougt so dere!⁴
 His kniif he had drawen þat tide⁵;
 For sorwe he sleynt⁶ oway biside,
 And wepe wiþ reweful⁷ chere.⁷

þan he hadde wopen⁸ þer he stode,
 Anon he turned oxain his mode,⁹
 And sayð wiþouten delay:
 ' Mi broþer was so kinde and gode,
 Wiþ grimly¹⁰ wounde he schad¹¹ his blod
 For mi love opon a day;
 Whi schuld Y þan mi childer spare,
 To bring mi broþer out of care?
 O, certes,¹² ' he sayð, ' nay!
 To help mi broþer now at þis nede,
 God graunt me þer to wele¹³ to speðe,¹⁴
 And Mari, þat best may¹⁵ I '

No lenger stint¹⁶ he no stode,¹⁷
 Bot hent¹⁸ his kniif wiþ dreri mode,
 And tok his children þo;
 For he nold nougt spille her¹⁹ blode,
 Over a bacine²⁰ fair and gode
 Her¹⁹ protes he schar²¹ atuo.²²

25

1 both two, both
 2 together
 3 pity
 4 time
 5 slunk
 6 pitiful
 7 countenance
 8 wept

9 changed his mind again
 10 fearful
 11 shed
 12 truly
 13 well-being
 14 advance
 15 can (help)
 16 forbore

17 nor stood still
 18 seized
 19 their
 20 basin (OF. *basin*)
 21 shore, cut
 22 in two, asunder

And when he hadde hem bope slain,
 He laid hem in her bed ogain,
 — No wonder þei¹ him wer² wo! —
 And hilde³ hem, þat no wigt⁴ schuld se;
 As no man hadde at⁵ hem be,⁶
 Out of chaumber he gan go.

And when he was out of chaumber gon,
 Þe dore he steked⁷ stille anon
 As fast as it was biforn;
 Þe kays he hidde under a ston,
 And þougþ þai schuld wene⁸ ichon
 Þat þai hadde ben forlorn.⁹
 To his broþer he went him þan,
 And seyð to þat careful¹⁰ man,
 Swiche time as God was born:
 'Ich have þe brougt mi childer¹¹ blod;
 Ich hope it schal do þe gode,
 As þe angel seyð biforn.'

'Broþer,' Sir Amiloun gan to say,
 'Hastow¹² slayn þine children tuay¹³?
 Allas, whi de[de]stow¹⁴ so?'
 He wepe and seyð: 'Waileway!
 Ich had lever¹⁵ til Domesday¹⁶
 Have lived in care and wo!'
 Þan seyð Sir Amis: 'Be now stille;
 Jesu, when it is his wille,
 May sende me childer mo.¹⁷
 For me¹⁸ of blis þou art al bare¹⁹;
 Ywis, mi liif wil Y nougt spare
 To help þe now þerfro.²⁰'

¹ though, if
² were
³ concealed
⁴ nobody
⁵ with
⁶ been
⁷ fastened

⁸ suppose
⁹ lost
¹⁰ full of care, sad
¹¹ children's
¹² hast thou
¹³ two
¹⁴ didst thou

¹⁵ rather
¹⁶ Doomsday
¹⁷ more
¹⁸ on my account
¹⁹ deprived of
²⁰ out of thy con

He tok þat blode, þat was so briȝt,
 And alied ¹ þat gentil kniȝt,
 þat er ² was hende ³ in hale ⁴;
 And seppen ⁵ in a bed him diȝt, ⁶
 And wreize ⁷ him wel warm, apliȝt, ⁸
 Wiþ cloþes riche and fale. ⁹
 'Proper,' he seyde, 'ly now stille,
 And falle on slepe purch Godes wille,
 As þe angel told in tale ¹⁰;
 And Ich hope wele, wiþouten lesing,
 Jesu, þat is heven King,
 Schal bote ¹¹ þe of þi bale. ¹²'

5

10

Sir Amis lete ¹³ him ly ¹⁴ alon,
 And into his chapel he went anon,
 In gest ¹⁵ as ȝe may here;
 And for his childer þat he hadde slon
 To God of heven he made his mon, ¹⁶
 And preyde wiþ rewely ¹⁷ chere
 [He] schuld save him fram schame þat day,
 And Mari, his moder, þat best may,
 þat was him leve ¹⁸ and dere.
 And Jesu Crist, in þat stede, ¹⁹
 Ful wele he herd þat kniȝtes bede, ²⁰
 And graunt ²¹ him his praier.

15

20

A morwe, ²² as tite ²³ as it was day,
 þe levedi com hom, al wiþ play, ²⁴
 Wiþ kniȝtes ten and five.

25

¹ anointed
² formerly
³ courteous
⁴ hall
⁵ afterwards
⁶ arranged
⁷ covered
⁸ in truth

⁹ many
¹⁰ his message
¹¹ cure
¹² suffering
¹³ left
¹⁴ to lie, lying
¹⁵ the story
¹⁶ mean

¹⁷ piteous
¹⁸ dear, precious
¹⁹ in that situation
²⁰ prayer
²¹ granted
²² on the morrow
²³ soon
²⁴ in merry mood

And seyð he hadde þe keys nome⁶;
Schuld no man in þe chaumber come
Bot himself and his wive.⁷

Anon he tok his levedi þan,
And seyð to hir: 'Leve leman,
Be bliþe and glad of mode;
For, bi him þat þis world wan,⁸
Boþe mi childer Ich have slan,⁹
þat were so hende¹⁰ and gode;
For me þougþ in mi sweven¹¹
þat an angel com fram heven,
And seyð me, þurch her blode¹²
Mi broþer schuld passe out of his wo;
þerfore Y sloug hem boþe to,
To hele þat frely fode.¹³

þan was þe levedi ferly wo,¹⁴
And seiþe¹⁵ hir lord was al so;
Sche comfort¹⁶ him ful gare.¹⁷
'O lef¹⁸ liif,' sche seyð þo,
'God may sende ous¹⁹ childer mo,
Of hem have þou no care;
Ȝif it ware at min hert rote,²⁰
For to bring pi broþer bote²¹
My lyf Y wold not spare.

1 where
2 woeful, indeed, were they in life
3 peace
4 cease
5 effort
6 taken
7 wife

8 won
9 slain
10 gentle
11 dream
12 by means of their blood
13 noble man
14 exceedingly sorrowful

15 saw
16 comforted
17 readily, soon
18 dear
19 us
20 my heart's root
21 remedy

For no man shal oure children see,
 To-morow shal þey beryed be
 Rigt as þey faire¹ ded ware.'

Al þus þe lady faire and bryȝt
 Comfort hur lord with al hur myȝt, 5
 As ȝe mow² understonde;
 And seth³ þey went boȝ ful ryȝt
 To Sir Amylion, þat gentyl knyȝt,
 þat ere⁴ was free⁵ to fonde.⁶
 And whan Sir Amylion wakyd þoo, 10
 Al his fowlehed⁷ was agoo,⁸
 þurch grace of Goddes sonde⁹;
 And þan was he as feire a man
 As ever he was ȝet or þan,¹⁰
 Seþ he was born in londe. 15

þan were þey al bliþ:
 Her¹¹ joy couþ no man kyth,¹²
 And þonked God þat day.
 And þan, as ȝe mow listen and lyth,¹³
 To a chamber þey went swyþ,¹⁴ 20
 þere þe children lay;
 And, without wemme¹⁵ and wound,
 Al hool¹⁶ and sound þe children found,
 And layen togeder and play.
 For joye þey wept þere þey stood, 25
 And þonked God with myld mood;
 Her care was al away.

¹ naturally² must³ afterwards⁴ formerly, before⁵ noble⁶ to make trial of; in trial⁷ disease⁸ gone⁹ messenger¹⁰ formerly or then¹¹ their¹² declare¹³ hearken¹⁴ quickly¹⁵ blemish¹⁶ whole

SIR ORFEO

Sir Orfeo (about 1320) is a classical fable metamorphosed into a fairy tale, told in the manner of a Breton lay. Orpheus, like the banished Duke in *As You Like It*, resorts to the fields and woods for a season, after Eurydice is borne away; but she is restored to him, he regains his kingdom, and they live long afterwards. Ker says of the lay (*English Literature: Medieval*, p. 127; see also *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 328): 'One may refer to it as a standard, to show what can be done in the mediæval art of narrative, with the simplest elements and smallest amount of decoration. It is minstrel poetry, popular poetry—the point is clear when King Orfeo excuses himself to the King of Faerie by the rules of his profession as a minstrel; that was intended to produce a smile, and applause perhaps, among the audience. But though a minstrel's poem, it is far from rude, and it is quite free from the ordinary faults of rambling and prosing, such as Chaucer ridiculed in his *Geste of Sir Thopas*. It is all in good compass, and coherent; nothing in it is meaningless or ill-placed.'

A ballad on the theme is No. 19 of Child's collection.

Our text follows Zielke's print (Breslau, 1880) of the Auchinleck manuscript (with lines 1–24, 33–46 supplied from Harl. MS. 3810), but the punctuation has been freely altered. Occasional variations from Zielke's readings are noted.

We redyn¹ ofte and fynde ywryte,²
 As clerkes don us to wyte,³
 Þe layes þat ben of harpyng
 Ben yfounde⁴ of frely [ferly?] þing.⁵
 5 Sum ben of wele, and sum of wo,
 And sum of joy and merþe also,
 Sum of trechery, and sum of gyle,
 And sum of happes⁶ þat fallen by whyle⁷;
 Sum of bourdys,⁸ and sum of rybaudry,
 10 And sum þer ben of þe feyrye.⁹
 Off alle þing þat men may se,
 Moost o love¹⁰ forsoþe þey be.
 In Brytain þis¹¹ layes arne¹² ywryte,
 Furst yfounde and forþe ygete,¹³

1 read
 2 written
 3 make us to know
 4 composed
 5 of noble matters

6 events
 7 happen at times
 8 mirth, jests
 9 magic, enchantment
 10 MS. lowe

11 th
 12 ar
 13 co

Of adventures þat fillen¹ by dayes,²
 Wherof Brytouns made her layes.
 When þey myght owher³ heryn
 Of adventures þat þer weryn,
 þey toke her harpys wip game,⁴
 Maden layes, and gaf it⁵ name.

5

Of adventures þat han befallē
 Y can sum telle, but nought alle.⁶
 Herken, lordyngs þat ben trewe,
 And Y wol zou telle of sir Orphewe.

10

Orfeo was a king,
 In his time an heize lording,
 A stalworþ man and hardi bo,⁷
 Large,⁸ curteys he was also.
 His fader was comen of King Pluto,
 And his moder of King Juno,
 þat sum time were as godes yhold,
 For aventours þat þai dede and told.

15

Orpheo most of ony þing
 Lovede þe gle of harpyng;
 Syker⁹ was every gode harpoure¹⁰
 Of hym to have moche honour.
 Hymself loved for to harpe,
 And layde pereon his wittes scharpe.¹¹
 He lernyd so, þer noþing was
 A better harper in no plas.

20

25

In þe world was never man born
 þat ever Orpheo sat biforn,
 And¹² he myȝt of his harpyng her,
 He schulde pinke þat he wer
 In one of þe joys of Paradys,
 Suche joy and melody in his harpyng is.

30

¹ fell
² once on a time
³ anywhere
⁴ joy, delight

⁵ them
⁶ MS. all
⁷ both
⁸ generous

⁹ sure
¹⁰ MS. harpoure
¹¹ and gave his keen mind to the matter
¹² if

Þis king sojurnd in Traciens,¹
 Þat was a cite of noble defens;
 He hadde wiþ him a quen of priis,²
 Þat was ycleped Dame Heurodis —
 5 þe fairest levedi, for þe nones,³
 Þat miȝt gon on bodi and bones,
 Ful of love and of godenisse,
 Ac⁴ no man may telle hir fairnise.

Bifel so in þe comessing⁵ of May,
 10 When miri and hot is þe day,
 Oway beþ winter-schours,
 And everi feld is ful of flours,
 And blosme breme⁶ on everi bouȝ
 Overal⁷ wexep⁸ miri anouȝ,⁹
 15 Þis ich¹⁰ quen, Dame Heurodis,
 Tok to¹¹ maidens of priis,
 And went in an undrentide¹²
 To play bi an orchard-side,
 To se þe floures sprede and spring,
 20 And to here þe foules¹³ sing.

Þai sett hem down al þre
 Under a fair ympe-tre,¹⁴
 And wel sone þis fair quene
 Fel on slepe¹⁵ opon þe grene.
 25 þe maidens durst hir nouȝt awake,
 Bot lete hir ligge¹⁶ and rest take;
 So sche slepe til afternone,
 Þat under[n]tide was al ydone.
 Ac so sone as sche gan awake,
 30 Sche crid and loþli bere¹⁷ gan make:
 Sche froted¹⁸ hir honden and hir fet,

¹ Thrace (*lit.* Thracians)² renown³ at that time⁴ but⁵ beginning⁶ bright⁷ everywhere⁸ grow⁹ enough¹⁰ same¹¹ two¹² morning¹³ birds¹⁴ grafted tree¹⁵ asleep¹⁶ lie¹⁷ displeasing behavior¹⁸ rubbed, wrung

And crached¹ hir visage, it bled wete;
 Hir riche robe sche² al torett,³
 And was ravysed⁴ out of hir witt.
 Þe two⁵ maidens hir biside
 No durst wip hir no leng⁶ abide,
 Bot ourn⁷ to þe palays ful rigt,
 And told boþe squier and knigt
 Þat her quen awede⁸ wold,
 And bad hem go and hir athold.⁹
 Knigtes urn,⁷ and levedis also,
 Damisels sexti and mo;
 In þe orchard to þe quen hye¹⁰ come,
 And her up in her¹¹ armes nome,¹²
 And brougt hir to bed atte¹³ last,
 And held hir pere fine¹⁴ fast.
 Ac ever sche held¹⁵ in o¹⁶ cri,
 And wold up and owy.¹⁷

When Orfeo herd þat tiding,
 Never him nas¹⁸ wers for¹⁹ noþing;
 He come up wip knigtes tene²⁰
 To chaumber rigt bifor þe quene,
 And biheld, and seyð wip grete pite:
 'O lef liif, what is te,²¹
 Þat ever gete hast ben so stille,
 And now gredest²² wonder schille²³?
 Þi bodi, þat was so white ycore,²⁴
 Wip þine nailes is al totore.²⁵
 Alas! þi rode,²⁶ þat was so red,
 Is as wan as þou were ded,

¹ scratched² MS. hye³ rent apart⁴ ravished; MS. reneyd⁵ MS. too⁶ longer⁷ ran⁸ go mad⁹ restrain¹⁰ they¹¹ their¹² took¹³ at the¹⁴ very¹⁵ continued¹⁶ one¹⁷ away¹⁸ it was not¹⁹ because of²⁰ ten²¹ what is ill with thee²² dost cry²³ wondrous shrill(y)²⁴ choicely²⁵ rent²⁶ complexion

And also þine fingres smale
 Beþ al blodi and al pale!
 Allas, þi lovesum eygen to¹
 Lokeþ so² man doþ on his fo!
 A, dame, Ich biseche merci!
 Lete ben³ al þis reweful cri,
 And tel me what þe is⁴ and hou,
 And what þing may þe help now.⁵

10 þo lay sche stille atte last,
 And gan to wepe swiþe fast,
 And seyde þus þe king to:
 'Allas, mi lord, sir Orfeo!
 Seppen we first togider were,
 Ones⁶ wroþ⁶ never we nere⁷;
 15 Bot ever Ich have yloved þe
 As mi liif, and so þou me.
 Ac now we mot delen ato⁸;
 Do þi best, for y mot⁹ go.'
 'Allas,' quath he, 'forlorn Ich am!
 20 Whider wiltow go, and to wham?
 Whider þou gost, Ichil¹⁰ wiþ þe,
 And whider Y go, þou schalt wiþ me
 'Nay, nay, sir, þat nougt nis¹¹;
 Ichil þe telle al hou it is:
 25 As Ich lay þis undertide,
 And slepe under our orchard-side,
 Þer come to me to¹ fair knigtes,
 Wele y-armed¹² al to rigtes,
 And bad me comen on¹³ heiging,¹⁴
 30 And speke wiþ her¹⁵ lord þe king.
 And Ich answerd at¹⁶ wordes bold,

¹ two
² as
³ put aside, cease
⁴ what ails thee
⁵ once
⁶ angry

⁷ were not
⁸ separate (part in two)
⁹ must
¹⁰ I will
¹¹ that is in no way possible
¹² armed

Y durst nougt, no Y nold.¹
 þai priked² oȝain, as þai miȝt drive³;
 þo kom her king also blive,⁴
 Wiþ an hundred kniȝtes and mo,
 And damisels an hundred also, 5
 Al on snowe-white stedes;
 As white as milke were her wedes.⁵
 Y no seiȝe never ȝete bifore
 So fair creatours ycore.⁶
 þe king hadde a croun on hed; 10
 It nas of silver, no of gold red,
 Ac⁷ it was of a precious ston;
 As briȝt as þe sonne it schon.
 And as son as he to me cam,
 Wold Ich, nold Ich,⁸ he me nam,⁹ 15
 And made me wiþ him ride
 Opon a palfray bi his side,
 And brouȝt me to his palays,
 Wele atird¹⁰ in ich ways,¹¹
 And schewed me castels and tours, 20
 Rivers, forestes, friþ¹² wiþ flours,
 And his riche stedes¹³ ichon;
 And seppen me brouȝt oȝain hom
 Into our owen¹⁴ orchard;
 And said to me þus afterward: 25
 "Loke, dame, to-morwe þatow¹⁵ be
 Riȝt here under þis ympe-tre,
 And þan þou schalt wiþ ous¹⁶ go,
 And live wiþ ous evermo;
 And ȝif þou makest ous ylet,¹⁷ 30
 Whar¹⁸ þou be, þou worst yfet,¹⁹

nor would I
 rode hard
 hasten
 very quickly
 their garments
 chosen out
 but

8 whether I was willing or not
 (would I, would I not)

9 took

10 adorned

11 in all ways

12 glade

13 places

14 own

15 that thou

16 us

17 delay

18 wherever

19 shalt be fetched

And þei ¹ þou best ² so totorn,
 3ete þou worst ³ wiþ ous yborn.⁴”
 5 When king Orfeo herd þis cas,⁵
 ‘Owe ⁶!’ quap he, ‘allas, allas!
 Lever me were to lete ⁷ mi liif,
 þan þus to lese ⁸ þe quen mi wiif!’
 He asked conseyl at ⁹ ich man,
 10 Ac no man him help no can.
 Amorwe ¹⁰ þe undertide is come,
 And Orfeo hap his armes ynome,¹¹
 And wele ten hundred knigtes wiþ him,
 Ich y-armed stout and grim;
 15 And wiþ þe quen wenten he ¹²
 Rigt unto þat ympe-tre.
 þai made scheltrom ¹³ in icha side,¹⁴
 And sayd þai wold þere abide,
 And dye þer everichon,
 20 Er þe quen schuld from hem gon.
 Ac 3ete amiddes hem ful rigt ¹⁶
 þe quen was oway ytwigt,¹⁶
 Wiþ fairi ¹⁷ forþ ynome;
 Men wist never wher sche was bicomē.¹⁸
 25 þo was þer criing, wepe, and wo;
 þe king into his chaumber is go,¹⁹
 And oft swoned opon þe ston,
 And made swiche diol ²⁰ and swiche mon
 þat neize his liif was yspent —
 30 þer was no amendement.
 He cleped togider his barouns,

¹ though
² be
³ shalt be
⁴ carried away
⁵ situation
⁶ O woe
⁷ give up

⁸ lose
⁹ from
¹⁰ on the morrow
¹¹ taken
¹² they
¹³ band, troop
¹⁴ each side

¹⁵ from amidst them
¹⁶ snatched; MS. ytvig
¹⁷ by witchcraft, magic
¹⁸ what was become of
¹⁹ gone
²⁰ dole

Erls, lordes of renouns¹;
 And when þai al ycomen were,
 'Lordinges,' he said, 'bifore ȝou here
 Ich ordainy min heige-steward
 To wite² mi kingdom afterward;
 In mi stede ben he schal,
 To kepe mi londes over al.
 For, now Ichave mi quen ylore,³
 Þe fairest levedi þat ever was bore,
 Never eft Y nil⁴ no woman se;
 Into wildernes Ichil te,⁵
 And live þer evermore
 Wip wilde bestes in holtes⁶ hore.⁷
 And when ȝe understond þat Y be spent,⁸
 Make ȝou þan a parlement,
 And chese ȝou a newe king;
 Now doþ ȝour best wip al mi þing.⁹'
 Þo was þer wepeing in þe halle,
 And grete cri among hem alle;
 Unneþe¹⁰ migt old or ȝong
 For wepeing speke a word wip tong.
 Þai kneled adoun al yfere,
 And praid him, ȝif his wille were,
 Þat he no schuld fram hem go;
 'Do way,' quap he, 'it schal be so.'
 Al his kingdom he forsoke,
 Bot a sclavin¹¹ on him he¹² toke—
 He ne hadde kirtel no hode,
 Schert, [ne] non oþer gode.
 Bot his harp he tok, algate,¹³
 And dede him barfot out atte ȝate;
 No man most¹⁴ wip him go.

1 renown
 2 rule
 3 lost
 4 will not
 5 journey

6 forests
 7 gray (from lichens or bareness)
 8 dead
 9 property
 10 scarcely, with difficulty

11 pilgrim's mantle
 12 MS. te
 13 notwithstanding
 14 was allowed

Oway! what þer was wepe and wo,
 When he þat hadde ben king wip croun,
 Went so poverlich out of toun!
 þurch wode and over heþ
 5 Into þe wildernes he geþ;
 Noping he fint þat him is ays,¹
 Bot ever he liveþ in gret malais.²
 He þat hadde ywed ³ þe fowe ⁴ and griis,⁵
 And on bed þe purper biis,⁶
 10 Now on hard heþe he liþ,
 Wip leves and gresse he him wriþ.⁷
 He þat hadde had castels and tours,
 River, forest, friþ wip flours,
 Now, þei ⁸ it comenci to snewe ⁹ and frese,
 15 þis king mote make his bed in mese ¹⁰;
 He þat had yhad knigtes of priis
 Bifor him kneland, and levedis,
 Now seþ he noping þat him likeþ,¹¹
 Bot wilde wormes bi him strikeþ ¹²;
 20 He þat had yhad plente
 Of mete and drink, of ich deynte,
 Now may he al day digge and wrote,¹³
 Er he finde his fille of rote.¹⁴
 In somer he liveþ bi ¹⁵ wild frut
 25 And berren ¹⁶ bot gode lut ¹⁷;
 In winter may he noping finde
 Bot rote, grases, and þe rinde.¹⁸
 Al his bodi was oway dwine ¹⁹
 For missays,²⁰ and al tochine.²¹
 30 Lord! who may telle þe sore ²²

¹ ease² distress, discomfort³ worn⁴ variegated fur⁵ gray fur⁶ fine linen (Lat. *byssus*)⁷ covers⁸ though⁹ snow¹⁰ moss¹¹ pleaseth¹² slip, crawl¹³ grub¹⁴ roots¹⁵ on¹⁶ berries¹⁷ very few (good little); MS. litte¹⁸ bark¹⁹ shrunk; MS. dvine²⁰ discomfort²¹ chapped²² pain

þis king sufferd ten zere and more?
 His here of his berd, blac and rowe,¹
 To his girdelstede was growe;
 His harp, whereon was al his gle,
 He hidde in an holwe tre; 5
 And, when þe weder was clere and brigþ,
 He toke his harp to him wel rigþ,
 And harped at his owen wille;
 Into alle þe wode þe soun gan schille,²
 þat alle þe wilde bestes þat þer beþ 10
 For joie abouten him þai tep,³
 And alle þe foules þat þer were
 Come and sete on ich a brere,⁴
 To here his harping afn,⁵
 So miche melody was þerin; 15
 And when he his harping lete⁶ wold,
 No best bi him abide nold.
 He miȝt se him bisides
 Oft in hot undertides
 þe king o fairi,⁷ wiþ his rout, 20
 Com to hunt him al about,
 Wiþ dun,⁸ [with] cri and bloweing,⁹
 And houndes also wiþ him berking;
 Ac no best þai no nome,¹⁰
 No never he nist¹¹ whider þai bcome. 25
 And oþer while he miȝt him se
 As a gret ost bi him te¹² —
 Wele atourned¹³ ten hundred knigtes,
 Ich y-armed to his rigtes,¹⁴
 Of contenaunce stout and fers, 30
 Wiþ mani desplaid baners,

¹ rough
² did shrill
³ draw
⁴ briar
⁵ perfectly; MS. afine

⁶ stop
⁷ fairyland
⁸ din
⁹ blowing of horns
¹⁰ did they take

¹¹ knew not
¹² come
¹³ appointed, fitted out
¹⁴ properly

And ich his swerd ydrawe hold,¹

Ac never he nist whider þai wold.

And oþer while he seige oþer þing:

Knigtes and levedis com daunceing,

In queynt atire, gisely,²

[With] queynt[e]³ pas and soft[e]ly;

Tabours and trumpes⁴ zede hem bi,

And al maner menstraci.

And on a day he seige him biside

Sexti levedis on hors ride,

Gentil and jolif⁵ as brid on ris⁶ —

Nouzt o man amonges hem þer nis;

And ich a faucoun on hond bere,⁷

And riden on haukin[g] bi o rivere.

Of game þai founde wel gode haunt⁸ —

Maulardes,⁹ hayroun,¹⁰ and cormeraunt.

þe foules of þe water ariseþ,

þe faucouns hem wele deviseþ¹¹;

Ich faucoun his pray sloug.

þat seige Orfeo, and loug.¹²

'Parfay,¹³' quap he, 'þer is fair game,

þider Ichil, bi Godes name!

Ich was ywon¹⁴ swiche werk to se';

He aros, and þider gan te.

To a levedi he was ycome,

Biheld, and haþ wele undernome,¹⁵

And seþ bi al þing þat it is

His owen quen, Dam Heurodis.

Ȝern¹⁶ he biheld hir, and sche him eke,

Ac noiþer to oþer a word no speke.

For messais þat sche on him seige,

¹ held

² handsomely

³ dainty

⁴ drums and trumpets; MS.
trimpes

⁵ merry

⁶ spray, twig

⁷ inf. after *seige*, line 9

⁸ resort

⁹ mallards (wild ducks)

¹⁰ heron

¹¹ make their plans well

¹² laugher

¹³ by (my) faith

¹⁴ wont, accustomed

¹⁵ perceived

¹⁶ eagerly, gladly

þat had ben so riche and so heige,¹
 þe teres fel out of her eige.
 þe oper levedis þis yseige,
 And makend hir oway to ride —
 Sche most wip him no lenger abide.
 'Allas,' quap he, 'now me is wo!
 Whi nil² deþ now me slo?
 Allas, wreche,³ þat Y no miȝt
 Dye now after þis siȝt!
 Allas! to⁴ long last mi liif,
 When Y no dar nouȝt wip mi wiif,
 No hye⁵ to me, o word speke.
 Allas! whi nil min hert breke?
 Parfay,' quap he, 'tide wat bitide,⁶
 Whider so þis⁷ levedis ride,
 þe selve⁸ way Ichil streche⁹;
 Of liif no deþ me no reche.¹⁰'

5

10

15

His sclavain he dede¹¹ on, als he¹² spac,¹³
 And henge his harp opon his bac,
 And had wel gode wil to gon —
 He no spard noiþer stub no ston.
 In at a roche þe leuedis rideþ,
 And he after, and nouȝt abideþ.
 When he was in þe roche ygo
 Wele þre mile oper¹⁴ mo,
 He com into a fair cuntray,
 As briȝt so¹⁵ sonne on somers day,
 Smoþe and plain and al grene —
 Hille no dale was þer non ysene.
 Amidde þe lond a castel he s[e]iȝe,
 Riche and real¹⁶ and wonder heige.

20

25

30

1 high, lofty
 2 will not
 3 miserable that I am
 4 too
 5 nor she
 6 happen what may happen

7 these
 8 same
 9 go
 10 I care not
 11 put
 12 MS. al so

13 spoke
 14 or
 15 as
 16 royal

Al þe utmast wal
 Was clere and schine¹ as cristal;
 An hundred tours þer were about,
 Degiselich² and bataild stout;
 Þe butras com out of þe dicke,³
 Of rede gold y-arched⁴ riche;
 Þe bonsour⁵ was anourned⁶ al
 Of ich maner divers animal;
 Wipin þer wer wide wones,⁷
 Al of precious stones;
 Þe werst piler on to biholde⁸
 Was al of burnist gold.
 Al þat lond was ever ligt:
 For when it schuld be þerk⁹ and nigt,
 Þe riche stones ligt gonne,¹⁰
 As bryht as dop at none þe sonne.
 No man may telle, no þenche in pougt,
 Þe riche werk þat þer was wrougt;
 Bi al þing him pink¹¹ þat it is
 Þe proude court of Paradis.
 In þis castel þe levedis aligt;
 He wold in after, gif he miȝt:
 Orfeo knockep atte gate;
 Þe porter was redi þerate,
 And asked what he wold have ydo.
 'Parfay,' quap he, 'Ich am a minstrel, lo!
 To solas þi lord wip mi gle,
 Ȝif his suete wille be.'
 Þe porter undede þe gate anon,
 And lete him into þe castel gon.
 Þan he gan bihold about al,
 And seiȝe ful¹² liggeand¹³ wipin þe wal

¹ bright, beautiful

² elaborately ornamented

³ moat

⁴ arched

⁵ arch

⁶ adorned; MS. avowed

⁷ apartments

⁸ to look on; in appearance

⁹ dark

¹⁰ began to shine

¹¹ it would see

¹² full many

¹³ lying

Of folk þat were pider ybrougt,
 And pougt dede, and nere nouȝt.
 Sum stode wiþouten hade,¹
 And sum non armes made,²
 And sum purch þe bodi hadde wounde, 5
 And sum lay wode,³ ybounde,
 And sum, armed, on hors sete,
 And sum astrangled as þai ete,
 And sum were in water adreynt,⁴
 And sum wiþ fire al forschreynt⁵; 10
 Wives þer lay on childbedde,
 Sum ded, and sum awedde⁶;
 And wonder fele þer lay bisides,
 Riȝt as þai slepe her⁷ undertides;
 Eche was þus in þis warld ynome, 15
 Wiþ fairi⁸ pider ycome.
 Þer he seiȝe his owen wiif,
 Dame Heurodis, his lef⁹ liif,
 Slepe under an ympe-tre:
 Bi her cloþes he knewe þat it was he.¹⁰ 20
 And when he hadde bihold þis¹¹ mervails alle,
 He went into þe kinges halle;
 Þan seiȝe he þer a semly¹² siȝt —
 A tabernacle blisseful and briȝt,
 Þerin her⁷ maister king sete, 25
 And her quen fair and swete.
 Her⁷ crounes, her⁷ cloþes schine so briȝt,
 Þat unneþe¹³ bihold he hem miȝt.
 When he hadde biholden al þat þing,
 He kneled adoun bifor þe king. 30

¹ head
² had not
³ mad
⁴ drowned
⁵ parched

⁶ out of their minds
⁷ their
⁸ enchantment
⁹ dear; MS. liif (see 91 23)
¹⁰ she

¹¹ these
¹² comely
¹³ with difficulty

'O lord,' he seyde, 'ȝif it þi wille were,
Mi menstraci þou schust¹ yhere.'

þe king answerd: 'What man artow,
þat art hider ycomen now?

5 Ich, no non þat is wiþ me,
No sent never after þe;
Seppen þat Ich here regni gan,
Y no fond so folehardi man

10 þat hider to ous durst wende,
Bot þat Ichim wold ofsende.²'

'Lord,' quap he, 'trowe³ ful wel,
Y nam bot⁴ a pover menstrel;

And, sir, it is þe maner of ous
To seche⁵ mani a lordes hous;

15 þei we nougt welcom no be,
Ȝete we mot⁶ proferi forþ our gle.⁷'

Bifore þe king he sat adoun,
And tok his harp so miri of soun,
And tempref⁸ his harp, as he wele can,
And blisseful notes he þer gan,

20 þat al þat in þe palays were
Com to him for to here,
And liggef⁹ adoun to¹⁰ his fete —
Hem þenkeþ¹¹ his melody so swete.

25 þe king herkneþ and sitt ful stille,
To here his gle he hap gode wille;
Gode bourde¹² he hadde of his gle,
þe riche quen also hadde he.¹³

30 When he hadde stint¹⁴ his harping,
þan seyde to him þe king:
'Menstrel, me likeþ wele þi gle;
Now aske of me what it be,

¹ shalt
² send for
³ believe
⁴ am only
⁵ seek

⁶ must needs
⁷ song, music
⁸ tunes
⁹ lie
¹⁰ at

¹¹ to them seems
¹² amusement, enjoyment
¹³ she
¹⁴ ceased

Largelich¹ Ichil² þe pay.
 Now speke, and tow migt asay.³
 'Sir,' he seyð, 'Ich biseche þe
 þatow woldest give me
 þat ich⁴ levedi, brigt on ble,⁵
 þat slepeþ under þe ympe-tre.'
 'Nay,' quap þe king, 'þat nougt nere⁶!
 A sori couple of ȝou it were,
 For þou art lene, rowe,⁷ and blac,
 And sche is lovesum, witþouten lac⁸;
 A loplich⁹ þing it were, forþi,¹⁰
 To sen hir in þi compayni.'
 'O sir,' he seyð, 'gentil king,
 Ȝete were it a wele fouler þing
 To here a lesing¹¹ of¹² þi mouþe;
 So, sir, as ȝe seyð nouþe,¹³
 What I wold aski, have Y schold;
 And nedes þou most þi word hold.¹⁴
 Þe king seyð: 'Seþþen it is so,
 Take hir bi þe hond, and go;
 Of hir Ichil þatow¹⁵ be bliþe.'

He knelyd adoun, and þonked him swiþe;
 His wiif he tok bi þe hond,
 And dede¹⁶ him swiþe out of þat lond,
 And went him out of þat þede¹⁷;
 Rigȝt as he come, þe way he ȝede.

So long he hap þe way ynome,
 To Traciens he is ycome,
 þat was his owen cite;
 Ac no man knewe þat it was he.
 No forþer þan þe tounes ende

¹ generously² I will³ if thou canst make trial⁴ same⁵ of hue⁶ were not possible⁷ rough⁸ lack, fault⁹ loathsome, dreadful¹⁰ therefore¹¹ lie¹² from¹³ now¹⁴ keep¹⁵ that thou¹⁶ went¹⁷ people

For knoweleche¹ [he] ne dūrst wende;
 Bot wiþ a begger ybilt² ful narwe.
 Þer he tok his herbarwe³
 To⁴ him and to his owen wiif
 5 As a minstrel of pover liif,
 And asked tidings of þat lond,
 And who þe kingdom held in hond.
 Þe pover begger in his cote⁵
 Told him everich a grot⁶ —
 10 How her quen was stole owy,
 Ten ȝer gon,⁷ wiþ⁸ fairy;
 And hou her⁹ king in exile ȝede,
 Bot no¹⁰ man nist in wiche þede;
 And hou þe steward þe lond gan hold;
 15 And oper mani þinges him told.
 Amorwe ogain none tide,¹¹
 He maked his wiif þer abide;
 Þe beggers cloþes he borwed¹² anon,
 And heng his harp his rigge¹³ opon,
 20 And went him into þat cite,
 Þat men miȝt him bihold and se.
 Erls and barouns bold,
 Buriays¹⁴ and levedis him gan bihold.
 'Lo,' þai seyð, 'swiche a man!
 25 How long þe here hongep him opan!
 Lo, hou his berd hongep to his kne!
 He is yclongen¹⁵ also a tre!'
 And as he ȝede in þe strete,
 Wiþ his steward he gan mete,
 30 And loude he sett on him a crie:
 'Sir steward,' he seyð, 'merci!
 Ich am an harpou of heþenisse¹⁶;

¹ for fear of being recognized

² lodged

³ shelter

⁴ for

⁵ cot

⁶ every little bit, every detail

⁷ ago

⁸ by

⁹ their

¹⁰ MS. so

¹¹ towards noon

¹² borrowed; MS. borwed

¹³ back

¹⁴ burgesse

¹⁵ shrunk, 1

¹⁶ from hea

Help me now in þis destresse !¹
 þe steward seyð : ' Com wiþ me home¹ ;
 Of þat Ichave, þou schalt have some.
 Everich gode harpour is welcom me to,
 For mi lordes love, Sir Orfeo.'

5

In þe castel þe steward sat atte mete,
 And many lording was bi him sete ;
 þer were trompour[s] and tabourers,
 Harpours fele, and crouders.²
 Miche melody þei maked alle ;
 And Orfeo sat stille in þe halle,
 And herknep. When þei ben al stille,
 He toke his harp and tempred schille³ ;
 þe blissefulest notes he harped þere
 þat ever ani man yherd wiþ ere ;
 Ich man liked wele his gle.

10

15

þe steward biheld and gan yse,
 And knewe þe harp also⁴ blive.⁵
 ' Menstrel,' he seyð, ' so mot þou prive,⁶
 Where hadestow þis harp, and hou ?
 Y pray þat þou me telle now.'
 ' Lord,' quap he, ' in uncouþe⁷ þede,
 þurch a wildernes as Y zede,
 þer Y founde, in a dale,
 Wiþ⁸ lyouns a man totorn smale,
 And wolves him frete⁹ wiþ teþ so scharp.
 Bi him Y fond þis ich[a]¹⁰ harp ;
 Wele ten gere it is ygo.'
 ' O,' quap þe steward, ' now me is wo !
 þat was mi lord, Sir Orfeo.
 Allas, wreche, what schal Y do,
 þat have swiche a lord ylore ?
 Away,¹¹ þat Ich was ybore !

20

25

30

¹ MS. come² players on the crowd, an early

Celtic form of the violin

³ shrilly⁴ MS. als⁵ instantly⁶ mayst thou prosper⁷ strange⁸ by⁹ devoured¹⁰ same¹¹ woe

þat him was so hard grace¹ ymarked,²
And so vile deþ ymarked³!

Adoun he fel aswon to grounde.
His barouns him toke up in þat stoun
5 And telleþ him hou it geþ —
It is no bot⁴ of manes deþ.

King Orfeo knewe wele biþan
His steward was a trewe man;
And loved him, as he auct to do,
10 And stont up and seyð⁵ þus: 'Lo,
Steward, herkne now þis þing:
Ȝif Ich were Orfeo þe king,
And hadde ysuffred ful gore⁶
In wildernisse miche sore;
15 And hadde ywon mi quen owy
Out of þe lond of fairy;
And hadde ybrougt þe levedi hende⁷
Rigt here to þe tounes ende,
And wiþ a begger her in ynome;
20 And were miself hider ycome
Poverlich to þe, þus stille,
For to asay þi gode wille;
And ich founde þe þus trewe,
þou no schust it never rewe⁸:
25 Sikerlich,⁹ for love or ay,¹⁰
þou schust be king after mi day.
Ȝif¹¹ þou of mi deþ hadest ben bliþe,
þou schust ben voided¹² also swiþe.¹³
þo al þo¹⁴ þat þerein sete
30 þat it was King Orfeo undergete,¹⁵
And þe steward him wele knewe.

¹ such misfortune

² appointed

³ decreed

⁴ time

⁵ help

⁶ MS. seyt

⁷ for a long time past

⁸ gentle, gracious

⁹ repent

¹⁰ truly

¹¹ or fear

¹² MS. and gif

¹³ shouldst have been pu

¹⁴ in all haste

¹⁵ then all those

¹⁶ understood, perceived

Over and over þe bord¹ he þrewe,
And fel adoun to his fet;
So dede everich lord þat þer sete;
And al þai seyð at o criing:
'Ze beþ our lord, sir, and our king!'

Glad þai were of his live.²
To chaumber þai ladde him also³ blive,⁴
And baped him, and schaved his berd,
And tired⁵ him as a king apert⁶;
And seþpen⁷ wip gret processioun
þai brougt þe quen into þat toun,
Wip al maner menstraci.

Lord, þer was grete melody!
For joie þai wepe wip her eige,
þat hem so sounde⁸ ycomen seiȝe.
Now king Orfeo newe coround is,
And his quen Dame Heurodis,
And lived long afterward;
And seþpen was king þe steward.

Harpours in Bretaine afterþan
Herd hou þis mervaille bigan,
And made⁹ a lay of gode likeing,
And nempned it after þe king;
þat lay 'Orfeo' is yhote¹⁰ —
Gode is þe lay, swete is þe note.
þus com Sir Orfeo out of his care;
God graunt ous alle wele to fare.

¹ table

² life

³ MS. als

⁴ as quickly as possible

⁵ attired

⁶ evident in his looks

⁷ afterwards

⁸ well in body

⁹ MS. made hercol

¹⁰ called

CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS

Sir Thopas is well characterized by Ker (*English Literature: Medieval*, pp. 129-31): 'Chaucer's burlesque is easily misunderstood. It is criticism, and it is ridicule; it shows up the true character of the common minstrelsy—the rambling narrative, the conventional stopgaps, the complacent childish vanity of the popular artist who has his audience in front of him, and knows all the easy tricks by which he can hold their attention. . . . Chaucer has made a good thing out of the rhyme doggerel, and expresses the pleasant old-fashioned quality of the minstrels' romances, as well as their absurdities. His parody touches on the want of plan and method and meaning in the popular rhymes of chivalry; it is also intended as criticism of their verse. That verse . . . is technically called *rime coulée* or "tail-rhyme." . . . It very readily becomes monotonous and flat. . . . But it is a form of stanza which may be so used as to escape the besetting faults; the fact that it has survived through all the changes of literary fashion, and has been used by poets in all the different centuries, is something to the credit of the minstrels, as against the rude common-sense criticism of the Host of the Tabard when he stopped the *Rime of Sir Thopas*.' Skeat also is tempted to break a lance in behalf of the poem (Chaucer, *Works* 3. 424): 'I cannot quite resist the suspicion that Chaucer may himself, in his youth, have tried his hand at such romance-writing in all seriousness, but lived to have a good-humored laugh even in some degree at his own expense; and he seems as if endeavoring to make his readers feel that they could wish there was somewhat more of it.'

For the parodies in detail, see Bennewitz' dissertation (Halle, 1879); Kölb-
ing's article in *Englische Studien*, Vol. 11; and Skeat's notes. Our text in
general follows Skeat.

For Chaucer in general, see Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (Boston, 1922),
Legouis, *Geoffrey Chaucer* (London, 1913), or Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People*
1. 267-343. To the investigator, Miss Hammond's *Chaucer: a Bibliographical*
Manual (New York, 1908) is indispensable.

I

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,¹
And I wol telle verrayment²
Of mirthe and of solas³;
Al of a knyght was fair and gent⁴
In bataille and in tourneyment—
His name was Sir Thopas.

¹ with good will
² verily

³ diversion
⁴ refined, noble

Yborn he was in fer contree,
 In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
 At Popering,¹ in the place²;
 His fader was a man ful free,³
 And lord he was of that contree,
 As it was Goddes grace.

5

Sir Thopas wex⁴ a doghty⁵ swayn;
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn,⁶
 His lippes rede as rose;
 His rode⁷ was⁸ lyk scarlet in grayn,⁹
 And I yow telle in good certayn,
 He hadde a semely nose.

10

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,¹⁰
 That to his girdel raughte¹¹ adoun,
 His shoon¹² of Cordewane¹³;
 Of Brugges¹⁴ were his hosen¹⁵ broun;
 His robe was of ciclatoun¹⁶
 That coste many a jane.¹⁷

15

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
 And ryde an hauking for riveer,¹⁸
 With grey goshawk on honde;
 Therto he was a good archeer;
 Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
 Ther¹⁹ any ram²⁰ shal stonde.

20

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,²¹
 They moorne for him, paramour,²²
 Whan hem were bet²³ to slepe;

25

small town in the dis-
 trict of Calais, south-
 west of Ostend
 Manor-house, chief house
 of a town or village
 noble
 new to be
 brilliant
 very fine white bread
 complexion (OE. *rudu*)
 S is

⁹ dyed with cochineal; of
 a fast color
¹⁰ yellow
¹¹ reached
¹² shoes
¹³ Cordovan leather
¹⁴ Bruges, in Belgium
¹⁵ tight-fitting trousers, cov-
 ering the feet
¹⁶ costly material, often em-
 broidered with gold

¹⁷ small coin of Genoa, re-
 ferred to in England as
 halfpence
¹⁸ towards the river
¹⁹ where
²⁰ A ram was the usual prize
 at a wrestling-match
²¹ bower
²² longingly
²³ it were better for them

But he was chaste and no lechour,¹
 And sweet as is the bremble-flour²
 That bereth the rede hepe.³

And so bifel upon a day,
 Forsothe, as I yow telle may,
 Sir Thopas wolde out ryde;
 He worth upon⁴ his stede gray,
 And in his honde a launcegay,⁵
 A long swerd by his syde.

He priketh⁶ thurgh a fair forest,
 Therinne is many a wilde best,
 Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
 And, as he priketh north and est,
 I telle it yow, him⁷ hadde almost
 Bitid⁸ a sory care.⁹

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
 The lycorys¹⁰ and cetewale,¹¹
 And many a clowe-gilofre¹²;
 And notemuge¹³ to put in ale,
 Whether it be moyste or stale,
 Or for to leye in cofre.¹⁴

The briddes¹⁵ singe, it is no nay,¹⁶
 The sparhawk¹⁷ and the papejay,¹⁸
 That joye it was to here;
 The thrustlecok¹⁹ made eek his lay,
 The wodedowve²⁰ upon the spray
 She sang ful loude and clere.

¹ unchaste man, debauchee² flower of the bramble (dog-rose)³ hip (fruit of the dog-rose)⁴ got upon⁵ a kind of lance, probably rather short⁶ rides hard⁷ to him⁸ happened⁹ a grievous misfortune¹⁰ licorice¹¹ zedoary (used in medicine
as a stimulant)¹² clove¹³ nutmeg¹⁴ a box¹⁵ birds¹⁶ it cannot be denied¹⁷ sparrow-hawk¹⁸ parrot¹⁹ male thrush²⁰ wood-dove

CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS

Sir Thopas fil in ¹ love-longinge
 Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
 And priked as he were wood ²;
 His faire stede in his prikinge
 So swatte ³ that men mighte him wringe;
 His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas eek so wery was,
 For prikinge on the softe gras —
 So fiers ⁴ was his corage —
 That doun he leyde him in that plas,
 To make his stede som solas,
 And yaf him good forage.

'O Seinte Marie, *ben'cite* ⁵!
 What eyleth this love at me, ⁶
 To binde ⁷ me so sore?
 Me dremed ⁸ al this night, pardee, ⁹
 An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
 And slepe under my gore. ¹⁰

An elf-queen wol I love, ywis, ¹¹
 For in this world no womman is
 Worthy to be my make, ¹²
 In toune ¹³;
 Alle othere wommen I forsake,
 And to an elf-queen I me take,
 By dale and eek by doune ¹⁴!'

Into his sadel he clamb anoon,
 And priketh over style ¹⁵ and stoon,
 An elf-queen for t' espye,

¹ fell into

² as if he were mad

³ sweat

⁴ fierce

⁵ *benedicite*, bless ye (the Lord)

⁶ with respect to me

⁷ enthrall

⁸ I dreamed

⁹ *par Dieu*

¹⁰ garment

¹¹ certainly, truly

¹² mate

¹³ in the town, in the district
 (a mere verse-tag)

¹⁴ down, hill

¹⁵ stile

Til he so longe had riden and goon
That he fond, in a privee woon,¹

The contree of Fairye
So wilde;

5 For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,²
Neither wyf ne childe,

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,³
(His name was Sir Olifaunt⁴),

10 A perilous man of dede.
He seyde: 'Child,⁵ by Termagaunt,⁶
But-if⁷ thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee⁸ thy stede
With mace.

15 Heer is the queen of Fayerye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye,⁹
Dwelling in this place.'

The childe seyde: 'Also mote I thee,¹⁰
To-morwe wol I mete thee,

20 Whan I have myn armoure;
And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,¹¹
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure¹²;

Thy mawe¹³

25 Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day,¹⁴
For heer thou shalt be slawe.¹⁵'

Sir Thopas drow abak¹⁶ ful faste;
This geaunt at him stones caste
30 Out of a fel¹⁷ staf-slinge¹⁸;

¹ secret retreat

² This line is supplied from
an inferior MS.

³ giant

⁴ Elephant

⁵ title of a young squire or
knight

⁶ a Saracen idol

⁷ unless

⁸ will slay

⁹ a kind of tabor

¹⁰ as I may thrive

¹¹ by my faith

¹² pay for it bitterly

¹³ maw, stomach

¹⁴ prime = 6-9 A.M.; fully
prime = 9 A.M.

¹⁵ slain

¹⁶ drew back

¹⁷ deadly

¹⁸ sling fastened to a stick

But faire escapeth Child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,¹
And thurgh his fair beringe.

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow rounne²
How Sir Thopas, with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to tounne.

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game³ and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte
With a geaunt with hevedes⁴ three,
For paramour⁵ and jolitee⁶
Of oon⁷ that shoon⁸ ful brighte.

'Do⁹ come,' he seyde, 'my min[i]strales
And gestours,¹⁰ for to tellen tales
Anon, in¹¹ myn arminge;
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eek of love-lykinge.'

They fette him first the swete wyn,
And mede¹² eek in a maselyn,¹³
And royal spicerye¹⁴
Of gingebreed¹⁵ that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,¹⁶
With sugre that is so trye.¹⁷

¹ grace, favor
² relate (*prop.* whisper)
³ sport
⁴ heads
⁵ love
⁶ amusement

⁷ one
⁸ shone
⁹ cause to
¹⁰ story-tellers
¹¹ during
¹² mead

¹³ maple bowl
¹⁴ mixture of spices
¹⁵ preserved ginger
¹⁶ cumin
¹⁷ choice

Of clooth of lake³ fyn and clere
A breech⁴ and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,⁵
And over that an habergeoun,⁶
For⁷ percinge of his herte;

And over that a fyn hauberk⁸
Was al ywroght of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate⁹;
And over that his cote-armour,¹⁰
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.¹¹

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And therin was a bores heed,
A charbocle¹² bisyde;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that 'The geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde¹³!'

His jambeux¹⁴ were of quirboilly,¹⁵
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton¹⁶ bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon¹⁷;
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light.

His spere was of fyn ciprees,¹⁸
That bodeth werre, and nothing¹⁹ pees,
The heed ful sharpe ygrounde;

¹ put on

² flesh

³ linen

⁴ pair of breeches

⁵ short, sleeveless tunic

⁶ coat of mail

⁷ as protection against

⁸ hauberk, coat of mail

⁹ breastplate on the front of
the hauberk (?)

¹⁰ a surcoat, not of metal

¹¹ combat

¹² carbuncle

¹³ happen what may happen

¹⁴ leg-pieces

¹⁵ boiled leather, dried very
hard (F. *cuir bouilli*)

¹⁶ latten (metal compounded
chiefly of copper and zinc)

¹⁷ walrus-ivory

¹⁸ cypress-wood (as associated
with death)

¹⁹ by no means

CHAUCER, SIR THOPAS

His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel¹ in the way,
Ful softely and rounde²
In londe.

Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit³!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.⁴

II

Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,⁵
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle⁶;
Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury,⁷
Anon I wol yow telle.

Men speke of romances of prys,⁸ —
Of Horn Child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and Sir Gy,
Of Sir Libeux and Pleyndamour;
But Sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of royal chivalry.

¹ at an ambling pace
² with an easy motion
³ a division of a song or poem

⁴ endeavor
⁵ for charity
⁶ story

⁷ courtship
⁸ renown

15. The romance of Horn appears in two forms, *King Horn* (see p. 11) and *Horn Childe*. Chaucer probably refers to *Horn Childe*.

The romance of *Sir Ypotis* has not much in common with the others mentioned here; in it the Emperor Adrian interrogates the child Ypotis as to matters of God's law.

16. *Sir Bevis of Hampton* and *Sir Guy of Warwick* are two of the longest and dullest of mediæval romances.

17. *Sir Libeux*: a romance entitled *Lybeaus Disconus* (*The Fair Unknown*). *Pleyndamour*: no romance of this name is known; the original must have been in French.

His gode stede al he bistrood,
 And forth upon his wey he glood¹
 As sparkle out of the bronde²;
 Upon his crest he bar a tour,³
 And therin stiked⁴ a lily-flour;
 God shilde his cors⁵ fro shonde⁶!

And for he was a knight auntrous,⁷
 He nolde⁸ slepen in non hous,
 But liggen⁹ in his hode¹⁰;
 His brighte helm was his wonger,¹¹
 And by him baiteth¹² his dextrer¹³
 Of¹⁴ herbes fyne and gode.

Himself drank water of the wel,
 As did the knight Sir Percivel,
 So worthy under wede,¹⁵
 Til on a day ———

¹ glided
² burning wood, brand
³ tower
⁴ fixed
⁵ body

⁶ shame, disgrace
⁷ adventurous
⁸ would not
⁹ lie
¹⁰ hood

¹¹ pillow (cf. *wang*)
¹² feeds
¹³ courser
¹⁴ on
¹⁵ well-looking in l

13. A reference to the romance, *Sir Perceval of Galles*.

TALES

CHAUCER, PRIORESS' TALE: THE LITTLE CHOIR-BOY

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note
Sir Thopas, p. 108.

PROLOGUE

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde ysprad ¹ (quod she);
For noght only thy laude precious
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned ² is, for on the brest soukinge ³
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge. ⁴

Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily-flour
Which that thee bar, ⁵ and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she herself is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir Sone, and soules bote. ⁶

O moder mayde! O mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, ⁷ brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest ⁸ down fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the Goost ⁹ that in th' alighte,
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,

read abroad
refected (cf. Ps. S. 2, Vulg.; Matt. 21. 16)
eking

⁴ praise
⁵ bore
⁶ healing, salvation

⁷ unburnt (Exod. 3. 2)
⁸ didst draw
⁹ Spirit (Matt. 1. 18)

men of dignitee: such as monks or clergy in choirs

Conceived was the Fadres Sapience,¹
 Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
 Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee
 5 Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
 For somtyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
 Thou goost biforn,² of thy benignitee,
 And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
 To gyden us unto thy Sone so dere.

10 My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
 That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
 But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
 That can unnethes³ any word expresse,
 15 Right so fare I; and therfor I yow preye,
 Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

THE TALE

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
 Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,⁴
 Sustened by a lord of that contree
 20 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
 For it was free, and open at either ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
 25 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
 Children an heep,⁵ ycomen of Cristen blood,
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yeer
 Swich maner doctrine⁶ as men used there,
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
 30 As smale children doon in hir childhede.

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. 1. 24
² dost anticipate

³ with difficulty
⁴ ghetto, Jews' quarter

⁵ number
⁶ kind of learning

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
 A litel clergeon,¹ seven yeer of age,
 That day by day to scole was his wone,²
 And eek also, wheras³ he saugh th' image
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

5

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone ytaught
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
 To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
 For sely⁴ child wol alday⁵ sone lere⁶;
 But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
 Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
 For he so yong to Crist did reverence.

10

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,⁷
 He *Alma Redemptoris* herde singe,
 As children lerned hir antiphoner⁸;
 And, as he dorste, he drough him ner⁹ and ner,
 And herkned ay the wordes and the note,¹⁰
 Til he the firste vers coude¹¹ al by rote.

15

20

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
 For he so yong and tendre was of age;
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye
 T' expounden him this song in his langage,
 Or telle him why this song was in usage;

25

¹ choir-boy² custom³ where⁴ good⁵ always⁶ learn; the line is a proverb⁷ small prayer-book, from which
children were taught to read⁸ anthem-book⁹ nearer¹⁰ tune¹¹ knew

17. The eleventh-century hymn 'Alma Redemptoris mater, quæ pervia cœli,' one of four antiphons addressed to the Virgin. It is used from the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of the Purification (February 2). It has been translated by Cardinal Newman and others.

This preye he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes¹ bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus: 'This song, I have herd se
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salve,² and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can³ but smal grammere.'

10 'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne⁴ it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,⁵
15 And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady to honoure.'

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldly
20 Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte —
To scoleward⁶ and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.⁷

As I have seyde, thurghout the Jewerye
25 This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
*O alma Redemptoris evermo.*⁸
The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
30 He can nat stinte⁹ of singing by the weye.

¹ knees
² greet
³ know

⁴ learn
⁵ disgraced
⁶ towards school

⁷ thought,
⁸ evermore
⁹ cease

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
 That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
 Up swal,¹ and seide: 'O Hebraik peple, alas!
 Is this to yow a thing that is honest,²
 That swich a boy shal walken as him lest³ 5
 In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,⁴
 Which is agayn your lawes⁵ reverence?'

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han⁶ conspyred
 This innocent out of this world to chace;
 An homicyde therto han they hyred, 10
 That in an aley⁷ hadde a pryvee place;
 And as the child gan forby for to pace,
 This cursed Jew him hente⁸ and heeld him faste,
 And kitte⁹ his throte, and in a pit him caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe¹⁰ they him threwe 15
 Wheras these Jewes purgen hir entraille.
 O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,¹¹
 What may your yvel entente yow availle?
 Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille;
 And namely ther¹² th' onour of God shal sprede, 20
 The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

'O martir, souted to¹³ virginitee!
 Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon¹⁴
 The whyte Lamb celestial,' quod she,
 'Of which the grete evangelist, Seint John, 25
 In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
 Biforn this Lamb, and singe a song al newe,
 That never, fleshly,¹⁵ wommen they ne knewe.'

¹ swelled² honorable³ it pleases⁴ to such purport⁵ due to your law⁶ have⁷ alley⁸ seized⁹ cut¹⁰ outhouse¹¹ made up of new Herods¹² especially where¹³ confirmed in¹⁴ without ceasing; cf. Rev. 14. 4¹⁵ carnally

This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
 After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
 For which, as sone as it was dayes light,
 With face pale of ¹ drede and bisy thoght,
 5 She hath at scole and elleswher him soght,
 Til finally she gan so fer espye ²
 That he last seyn was in the Jewerye.

With modres ³ pitee in hir brest enclosed,
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
 10 To every place wher she hath supposed
 By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte —
 Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte.

She frayneth ⁴ and she preyeth pitously
 To every Jew that dwelte in thilke ⁵ place,
 To telle hir if hir child wente oght forby. ⁶
 They seyde, 'Nay'; but Jesu, of his grace,
 Yaf ⁷ in hir thought, inwith ⁸ a litel space,
 20 That in that place after hir sone she cryde
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer ⁹ thy might!
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
 25 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
 Ther ¹⁰ he with throte ycorven ¹¹ lay upright,
 He *Alma Redemptoris* gan to singe
 So loude that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
 30 In coomen, for to wondre upon this thing,

¹ from
² find out
³ mother's
⁴ asks questions

⁵ that
⁶ had chanced to go by
⁷ gave
⁸ within

⁹ here
¹⁰ where
¹¹ cut, slashed

And hastily they for the provost¹ sente;
 He cam anon, withouten taryng,
 And herieth² Crist that is of heven King,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde;
 And, after that, the Jewes leet he binde.³

5

This child with pitous lamentacioun
 Uptaken was, singing his song alway;
 And with honour of greet processioun
 They carien him unto the nexte⁴ abbay.
 His moder swowning by the bere lay;
 Unnethe might the peple that was there
 This newe Rachel⁵ bringe fro his bere.

10

With torment and with shamful deth echon⁶
 This provost dooth⁷ thise Jewes for to sterve⁸
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
 He nolde no swich cursednesse⁹ observe.¹⁰
 Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve;
 Therfor with wilde hors¹¹ he dide hem drawe,¹²
 And after that he heng hem¹³ by the lawe.

15

Upon his bere ay lyth¹⁴ this innocent
 Biform the chief auter,¹⁵ whyl masse laste,
 And after that, the abbot with his covent¹⁶
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
 And whan they holy water on him caste,
 Yet spak this child, whan spreynd¹⁷ was holy water,
 And song: *O alma Redemptoris mater!*

20

25

This abbot, which that was an holy man —
 As monkes been, or elles oghten be —

¹ chief magistrate
² praises
³ he caused to be bound
⁴ nearest
⁵ Cf. Matt. 2. 18
⁶ each one

⁷ causes
⁸ die
⁹ wickedness
¹⁰ favor
¹¹ horses
¹² had them drawn

¹³ them
¹⁴ lies
¹⁵ altar
¹⁶ monks of the convent
¹⁷ sprinkled

This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
 And seyde: 'O dere child, I halse¹ thee
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
 5 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge²?'

'My throte is cut unto my nekke-boon,'
 Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,³
 I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon;
 But Jesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
 10 Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde;
 And, for the worship of his moder dere,
 Yet may I singe *O alma* loude and clere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
 I lovede alwey, as after my conninge⁴;
 15 And whan that I my lyf sholde⁵ forlete,
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
 This antem⁶ verrailly in my deyinge,
 As ye han herd; and, whan that I had songe
 Me thoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge

20 Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot⁷ certeyn
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,
 Til fro my tonge oftaken is the greyn;
 And afterward thus seyde she to me:
 "My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
 25 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;
 Be nat agast,⁸ I wol thee nat forsake."

This holy monk — this abbot, him mene I —
 His tonge outcaughte, and took away the gre
 And he yaf up the goost ful softly.

¹ implore
² as it appears to me
³ nature

⁴ within the limits of my knowledge
⁵ ought to have
⁶ anthem

And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
 His salte teres trikked down as reyn,
 And gruf¹ he fil al plat² upon the grounde,
 And stille he lay as he had been ybounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
 Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere;
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
 Enclosen they his litel body swete;
 Ther³ he is now, God leve⁴ us for to mete.

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln,⁵ slayn also
 With⁶ cursed Jewes, as it is notable —
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago —
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
 That, of his mercy, God so merciable
 On us his grete mercy multiplye,
 For reverence of his moder Marye.

THE IMPRISONED WIFE

The Seven Sages of Rome, from which this story is taken, is the European counterpart of the Oriental *Book of Sindibād*, ultimately, according to general scholarly belief, of Indian origin. *The Book of Sindibād* exists in a number of versions (Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Persian, etc.), and the European *Seven Sages* in many more, the latter being found in one or more forms in almost every language of Europe. As late as 1892 a Lithuanian version was printed at Plymouth, Pennsylvania.

How the Oriental outline of the story was carried westward is a matter of conjecture. Since only four of the fifteen tales in the European collection are similar to those in any Eastern versions, it has been supposed that the transmission was probably oral, and a crusader returning from the Holy Land has been suggested as the possible transmitter. In any case, the most important element borrowed from the East is the frame or general plan of a series of tales told by seven wise men in defending a young prince against the accusations

¹ face downward, groveling

² flat

³ where

⁴ grant

⁵ Cf. Skeat's note

⁶ by

of the queen, his stepmother, and the tales told by the queen in reply. Like the frames of *The Arabian Nights*, of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and of more modern groups, down to Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, this serves not only as a device by which to unite a number of tales, but also to account in some measure for the general character of the tales themselves.

The following selection is from the Cottonian manuscript of the Middle English version (British Museum Cotton Galba E. 9). This manuscript (apparently copied from a lost earlier one) has been dated as of the first third of the fifteenth century. For a full discussion of dates and other details, and *The Seven Sages of Rome* in general, see the edition by Killis Campbell (Ginn, 1907) from which our text (including lines 3236-3726 of the poem), with certain emendations and changes of punctuation, is taken.

Among the most interesting analogues and variants of our *Inclusa*-story (which is not one of those found in the Oriental versions) are Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus* (cf. Act 2); Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* 1. 22; *The Thousand and One Nights*, ed. Habicht, II. 140; Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* I. 281.

In þe kingdom of Hungery
Wond¹ a nobil knyght whylom,
A rightwis man and whise of dome.²
He dremyd þus upon a nyght,
5 þat he lufed a lady bryght,
Bot he ne wist in what contre
þat þe lady myght funden be.
Him thocht he knew hir wele bi kinde,
And wele he hopid he sold hir finde.
10 þat same time dremyd þat ladi bryght,
And thocht þat sho sold luf a knight;
Bot sho wist noght of what land,
Ne in whate stede³ he was dweland,⁴
Ne his name knew sho nathing;
15 þarfore made sho grete murnyng.
Opon þe morn, þe stori sayse,
þe knight toke horses and hernays,⁵
And went to seke þat lady bryght
þat him dremyd of þat nyght.
20 þat jorney unto him was hard,

¹ dwelt
² judgment

³ place
⁴ dwelling

For he wist noght whederward
 þat he sold tak þe redy way;
 þarfore he drowped¹ night and day.
 So he travelde monethes thre,
 And no signe of hyr kowth he se;
 Bot wele in hert he hoped ay
 þat he sold hir se sum day.

5

So fer þe knyght his way had nomen
 þat into Hungeri es he cumen.
 þare he findes a faire castele
 Bi þe se-syde, wroght ful wele;
 þarin stode a towre ful hee;
 Fairer saw he never with ee.
 An erl wond in þat castele
 þat aght² þe lordship ilka dele.
 With him he had a worthy wife,
 þe fairest lady þat had lyfe.
 þe erl was jeluse of þat lady;
 He sperid³ hir in þe toure forþi⁴;
 Sho might noght out by day ne night,
 To speke with swier⁵ ne with knight.
 In þat land was were⁶ ful strang,
 Of kinges and lordes, þat lasted lang.
 þare come ridand þat nobil knight,
 þat so had soght þe lady bright;
 He loked up unto þe toure,
 And saw þe lady, white so⁷ flowre,
 Lig⁸ in a window barred with stele.
 þan in his hert he wist ful wele
 þat þis lady was þe same
 þat he had so dremyd of at hame.
 He loked up unto þe toure,
 And merily sang he of amowre.⁹

10

15

20

25

30

¹ drooped
² owned, possessed
³ bolted, locked

⁴ for that reason, therefore
⁵ squire
⁶ war

⁷ as
⁸ lie
⁹ love

And when sho herd him so bigyn,
 Unnethes might pat ladi blyn¹
 þat sho ne had cald him hir unto;
 Bot for hir lord sho durst noght do.
 5 He sat biside under a tre,
 At þe ches,² a knyght and he.
 Þis knyght percayved þe erl þare.
 Unto þe lady he mened³ na mare;
 Bot til⁴ þe erl he rides ful right,
 10 And of his palfray down he lyght.
 On his kne sonc he him set,
 And þe erl ful faire he gret;
 'Sir Erl,' he said, 'I am a knight,
 Out of my cuntre cumen for fight;
 15 Þeder ogayn dar I noght gane,
 For a knight þare have I slane;
 Þarfore, sir, if þi willes be,
 Þus am I cumen to dwel with þe.
 My famen er ful steren⁵ and stout;
 20 Þai have destroyed my landes about.'
 Þe erl said: 'So mot I þe,
 Right so fares my famen with me;
 So þat I have no socoure
 Bot þis castel and þis toure.
 25 Þarfore, sir, þou ert welkum here;
 Of swilk a man have I mystere⁶;
 And if þou wil me help trewly,
 I sal þe gif grete mede forthy.'
 'Ȝis, sir,' he sayd, 'at my power,
 30 Ay whils I my armes bere.'
 With þe erl þus dwels þe knight,
 Al for luf of þe lady bryght.
 Þar was na knight þat bare shelde
 þat might so wele his wapen welde;

¹ restrain herself² chess³ made moan⁴ to⁵ stern⁶ need

Thorgh strenkith of hand and Godes grace
He overcome al þe erles fase.¹

þe erl him lufed and honord þan

Mare þan any oþer man ;

He made hym steward of al his land,

And bad þe men bow til hys hand.

5

Sone efter þat, opon a day,

þe knyght allane went him to play,

Under þe toure whare þe lady was ;

þare he made him grete solace.

10

þe lady in a wyndow lay,

And saw þe knyght allane him play ;

A letter sone sho kest hym tyll,

Wharby he might wit² al hir will.

þe knight toke up þe parchemyne,

15

And red þe Franche ful fayre and fyne ;

And alsone als he red it had,

Was he never in hert so glad ;

By þat letter þe knight wele kend

þat his travayl was cumen till end.

20

Ful sare him langed to hyr at³ ga,

Prevely, withowten ma ;

And wele he saw þat, by na gyn,⁴

Allane to hir myght he noght wyn⁵ ;

þar was bot a dur and a way,

25

And þarof bare þe erl þe kay.

So on a day, with mylde worde,

þe knyght spekes unto hys lord,

And said : ' Sir, of þi gude grace,

I pray þe to gif me a place

30

Bifore þis towre, þat I may big⁶

A litel place in for to lig,

And þat I mai my wonyng have

At myne ese if ge vowchesave.'

¹ foes
² know

³ to
⁴ device

⁵ succeed in going
⁶ build

þat I may cum in prevete
 Unto þe lady and sho to me.
 'Sertes, sir,' said þe mason sone,
 'Als þou has said, it sal be done.'
 Hastily he takes hys tole,¹
 And in þe toure he made a hole,
 þat þe knight might cum þe ladi untill,
 Night and day, at þaire owyn will.
 When þe lady wist of þis,
 Hir thoght hir hert was ful of blis.
 þe knight quit² wele þe servise
 Of þe mason for his quayntyse³:
 He slogh him sone, þat ilk[e] day,
 For fered⁴ þat he sold oght say.

And efterward, ful sone onane,⁵
 Into þe toure þe knight gan gane;
 Thurgh þe hole gan he pas,
 Til he come whare þe lady was.
 Bitwene þam was grete joy and blis;
 In armes ful curtaysly þai kys.
 Wele sho wist it was þat knyght
 þat sho had dremyd of anyght.
 Sho said: 'Sir, þou art welkum here.'
 He said: 'Gramercy,⁶ lady dere.'
 To hir he talde of his dremeing,
 And sho him talde of þe same thing;
 And when þai wist it was sertayn,
 Ayther of oper was ful fayn.
 Sho lete him wirk þare al his will;
 And seþen he said þe lady untyll:
 'Dame, I dar no lenger byde,
 For herein may þou me noght hide.
 And þarfore, dame, have now goday;
 I sal cum ogayn when I may.'

¹ tool
² repaid

³ cunning, skill
⁴ fear

⁵ at once
⁶ many thanks

þe lady, at þaire departyng.¹
 Gaf þe knight a gude gold ring,
 And said: ' Sir, I pray to þe,
 When þou sese þis, thinke on me.'
 5 At² þe lady þe ryng he tase,
 And graythly³ til þe hole he gase;
 Þe ring he put his fynger on,
 And doun ogayn he hied him sone
 Thurgh þe hole was made of stane:
 10 A meri man þe knight was ane.
 Þe knyght went unto þe hall,
 Unto þe erl and his menze⁴ all;
 Þe erl gert him sit ful nere,
 And to hym made he meri chere.
 15 Als þai spak of divers thing,
 Þe erl saw his whives ring
 Opon þe knyghtes fynger bare;
 He had wonder how it was þare.
 He wist wele þar was none slike,⁵
 20 Ne þat none might be made so like;
 And ever he thinkes in hert styll
 How ani man might come her till.
 Styl he held al in his thocht;
 Unto þe knyght he sayd right noght,
 25 Bot up he rase bilyve onane;
 Unto his whife he thocht to gane,
 For to wit whare hir ring was.
 Þe knight perzayved al þe case;
 He hies als fast als he may
 30 Tite⁶ until hys preve way.
 Þe erl hies to þe lady fre,
 Bot þe knyght come lang or⁷ he;
 Unto þe lady þe ring he cast,

¹ parting, separation

² from

³ quickly

⁴ retinue

⁵ such

⁶ quickly

And down ogayn he hies him fast.
 Þe lady has þe ring up hent;
 Sho wist ful wele þan how it went;
 Sho did it in hir purs in horde,¹
 And sone þarefter come hir lorde,
 And with gude chere he gan hir glade,
 And asked hyr what chere sho made.
 Sho said sho myght have no solace,
 So was sho presond in þat place
 Fra þe sight of alkins² men:
 'How may I any kumforth ken?'
 'Dame,' said þe erl ful sone,
 'For grete derenes es yt done,
 And for I wil nane change þi thocht.'
 Þe lady said: 'Sir, thinkes it noght;
 Þar es no knight in no cuntre
 Þat might change my luf fra þe;
 And sen ȝe wil þat it be þus,
 At ȝowre lyking habide me bus,³
 For oþer cumforth kepe⁴ I nane
 Bot of God and of ȝow allane.'
 Þe erl thocht ȝit on oþer thing.
 'Dame,' he said, 'whare es þi ring
 Þat I þe gaf of gold ful fyne?
 Lat me se it, leman myne.'
 Þe lady answerd hym unto:
 'Sir, what sal ȝe þarwith do?
 Wene ȝe þat it be oway
 For⁵ I were it noght ilk day?
 Nai, sir, dredes ȝow never a dele,
 For I sal ȝeme⁶ it wonder wele.'
 'Dame,' he sayd, 'for luf of me,
 A sight þarof þat I might se;
 And, sertes, I ask it for none ill.'

¹ hoard
² of every kind

³ it behooves me to abide
⁴ care for

⁵ because
⁶ care for

þe lady, at þaire departyng,¹
 Gaf þe knight a gude gold ring,
 And said: 'Sir, I pray to þe,
 When þou sese þis, thinke on me.'
 5 At² þe lady þe ryng he tase,
 And graythly³ til þe hole he gase;
 Þe ring he put his fynger on,
 And doun ogayn he hied him sone
 Thurgh þe hole was made of stane:
 10 A meri man þe knight was ane.
 Þe knyght went unto þe hall,
 Unto þe erl and his menze⁴ all;
 Þe erl gert him sit ful nere,
 And to hym made he meri chere.
 15 Als þai spak of divers thing,
 Þe erl saw his whives ring
 Opon þe knyghtes fynger bare;
 He had wonder how it was þare.
 He wist wele þar was none slike,⁵
 20 Ne þat none might be made so like;
 And ever he thinkes in hert styll
 How ani man might come her till.
 Styl he held al in his thoght;
 Unto þe knyght he sayd right noght,
 25 Bot up he rase bilyve onane;
 Unto his whife he thoght to gane,
 For to wit whare hir ring was.
 Þe knight perzayved al þe case;
 He hies als fast als he may
 30 Tite⁶ until hys preve way.
 Þe erl hies to þe lady fre,
 Bot þe knyght come lang or⁷ he;
 Unto þe lady þe ring he cast,

¹ parting, separation² from³ quickly⁴ retinue⁵ such⁶ quickly⁷ before

And doun ogayn he hies him fast.
 Þe lady has þe ring up hent;
 Sho wist ful wele þan how it went;
 Sho did it in hir purs in horde,¹
 And sone þarefter come hir lorde, 5
 And with gude chere he gan hir glade,
 And asked hyr what chere sho made.
 Sho said sho myght have no solace,
 So was sho presond in þat place
 Fra þe sight of alkins² men: 10
 'How may I any kumforth ken?'
 'Dame,' said þe erl ful sone,
 'For grete derenes es yt done,
 And for I wil nane change þi thocht.'
 Þe lady said: 'Sir, thinkes it noght; 15
 Þar es no knight in no cuntre
 Þat might change my luf fra þe;
 And sen ge wil þat it be þus,
 At zowre lyking habide me bus,³
 For oþer cumforth kepe⁴ I nane 20
 Bot of God and of zow allane.'
 Þe erl thought zit on oþer thing.
 'Dame,' he said, 'whare es þi ring
 Þat I þe gaf of gold ful fyne?
 Lat me se it, leman myne.' 25
 Þe lady answerd hym unto:
 'Sir, what sal ge þarwith do?
 Wene ge þat it be oway
 For⁵ I were it noght ilk day?
 Nai, sir, dredes zow never a dele, 30
 For I sal zeme⁶ it wonder wele.'
 'Dame,' he sayd, 'for luf of me,
 A sight þarof þat I might se;
 And, sertes, I ask it for none ill.'

¹ hoard
² of every kind

³ it behooves me to abide
⁴ care for

⁵ because
⁶ care for

Sho said: 'Sir, gladly at yowre will.'
Out of hir purs þe ring sho toke;
þe lord gan graythly on hir loke.
'Lo! sir,' sho said, 'here is my ring.'

5 þe erl had mervail of þis thing,
þat it was [so] like, by syght,
þe ring þat he saw of his knight;
Bot wele he hopid¹ and weterly²
þat nane might win to þe lady,
10 Ne þat hir ring was noght hir fra,
Bot þat þai had bene like, þai twa.

 He was wele solast of þat sight,
And þare he dwelled al þat night;
þe lady bi hirself oft smyled,
15 And thocht þat he was wele bigild.
Opon þe morn þe knyght up rase,
And to þe kirk graythly he gase,
Goddess werkes þare for to wirk.
Seþen com þe erl unto þe kyrk;
20 A mes³ ful sone þan gert he sing,
In honowre of oure Hevyn-kyng.
þe erl sent þan hastily
Efter þe knyght of Hungery;
þe knyght come sone þe erl untill.
25 þe erl said: 'Sir, if [þat] pou will,
þou sal wend to wod with me,
At⁴ hunt, and solace for to se.'

 þe knyght answerd wordes hende⁵:
'Sir, to wod may I noght wende,
30 For me es cumen new tiþand⁶
þat makes me ful wele lykand,⁷
Fra my cuntre withowten lese⁸ —
þat my frendes haves made mi pese

⁴ to

⁵ courteous

⁶ tidings

⁷ pleased

⁸ deception

THE IMPRISONED WIFE

For þat knight þat I have slayn;
 And of þir¹ tipandes am I fayn.
 And, sir, þir² tipandes es me broght
 Bi my leman, þat has me soght
 Heder out of myne awin cuntre.
 þarfore, sir, if gowre wil be,
 þis day I pray gow with me etc,
 And se my leman at þe mete,
 And for to make cumforth hir till.⁷
 þe erl said: ' Gladly I will
 Do al þe comforth þat I can
 Bath to þe and þi leman;
 Whenso þou will, send efter me,
 And smertly⁸ sal I cum to þe.'

þan went þe erl to his solace,
 Unto þe wod to mak his chace;
 And þe knight went sone onane,
 And ordand⁴ mete and drink gud wane.⁵
 His hows he dight⁶ on gude aray;
 And smertly þan he toke þe way
 Unto þe lady faire and bright,
 And gert þat sho war gayly dyght
 In gold garmentes, richely wroght,
 And talde hir al how he has thoght
 þat ilk day sho and hir lord
 Sold bath togeder et⁷ of a bord,
 And how hir lord sold understand
 þat sho war cumen out of fer land.
 Down he broght hir til his hows
 Hamely,⁸ als sho war his spows;
 Bot hir garmentes war al new,
 þat no man in þat cuntre knew.
 Opon hir fingers gert he done

¹ these

² MS. þis

³ quickly; MS. smeretly

⁴ ordered

⁵ quantity

⁶ fitted out

Gold ringes ful many one;
 Hir hed was gayly duded ¹ and dyght
 With gerlands al of gold ful bright;
 So out of kenying ² he hir broght
 5 þat hir lord þan knew hir noght.
 Fra hunting come þe erl in hi ³;
 Þe knyght him keped ⁴ ful curtaisly,
 And til his hows he led him þan
 For to ett with his leman.
 10 Redy was ordaynd and dyght
 Mete and drink for mani a knight.
 Unto þe bord þe erl es set,
 And his whif, with him to et.
 Þe knight said: 'Þis es my leman;
 15 Makes hir comforth if ȝe can.'
 Þe erl bad sho sold be blith,
 And he biheld hir mony a syth ⁵;
 And wonder in his hert had he
 How þat it so myght be
 20 þat any lady in þis life
 Might be so like his owin wyfe.
 Þe lady praied him blith to be,
 And ett gladly, par charite.
 Þe erl bad hir also be glad,
 25 And loked on hir als he war mad;
 Bot he thoght þe towre was so strang
 þat þare myght no man do him wrang,
 Ne þat his whif might noght cum doun;
 þarfore trowed he no tresowne.
 30 He thoght: 'Oft sythes bifalles slike,⁶
 þat mani wemen er oþer like,
 Als was þe ring of gold fyne
 þat I wend wele had bene myne.'

¹ decorated
² recognition

³ haste
⁴ received

⁵ time
⁶ happen such thing

þus þe erl left all his care ;
Of þis mater he thinkes no mare.

þan said þe knight on þis manere
Unto þe erl : ' Sir, mase¹ gude chere.'

þe erl said : ' Sir, I þe pray,

þe sertan soth þat þou me say

Wheþin² es þis faire lady

þat þou has set at met me by ?'

þe knight said : ' Sir, bi my lewte,³

Sho es cumen fra myne awyn cuntre ;

Sho es my leman þat has me soght,

And new tithandes sho haves me broght :

Mi pese es made for evermare

For þe knight þat I slogh þare,

So þat I may wend hardily

Hame ogayn my pese to cri ;

And þarfore wil I with hir wende,

For to speke with ilka frende.'

' Sir, sekerly,' said þe erl þan,

' Me think þou has a fayre leman.'

Whan þai had etyn and dronken inoghe,

þai toke up mete, and clathes drogh.⁴

When þe erl liked to gane,

He toke leve at⁵ þe knyghtes leman ;

And hastily when he was went,

þe knight and þe lady gent

Sone did of⁶ þe riche aray

þat þai had done on⁷ þat day ;

Hir awyn robe sone did þai on,

And dighted hir als sho was won.⁸

And þan sho toke þe preve sty⁹

Into þe toure ful hastily ;

¹ make
² whence
³ loyalty

⁴ cleared the table
⁵ of
⁶ took off

⁷ put on
⁸ accustomed
⁹ ascent

þe knight gan playnly with hir pas
 Until sho in hir chamber was.
 And unnethes was þe knyght went out
 When þe erl was gane obowt¹;
 5 Unto þe toure he takes þe way
 Als hastily als ever he may;
 þare he findes his lady,
 Keped him ful curtaysely.

þan was þe erl in hert ful glad
 10 When he wist þat he hir had.
 Him thocht git² sho was like fully
 To þe lady þat sat him by.
 þare þe erl dwelled al nyght,
 And laiked³ him with his lady bright.
 15 þat night þai wrought what paire wils ware;
 And on þat wise⁴ þai met na mare.
 Herkens now, how it bifell:
 On þis maner stode þat castell,
 þat þe se ran fast byside;
 20 Many gode shippes gan þare bide.
 Whils þe erl of grete honowre
 Lay with þe lady in þe towre,
 þe knight ordand a ship of sail,
 And gert bere þeder gude vetaille⁵;
 25 Al his gode⁶ þeder gert he bere,
 Gold and silver and oþer gere.

On þe morn þe erl forth gase,
 And left his lady in þat place.
 Until þe kirk þan went he soþe
 30 And herd his mes als he was wone;
 And when he to þe kirk was gane,
 þe knyght went to þe towre onane,
 And down he broght þe fayre lady

¹ had started to go
² yet, nevertheless

³ sported
⁴ in that manner

⁵ provisions
⁶ property

Into his hows ful prevely.
And of ¹ þai toke þe clathes sone
þat þe lady had hir on;
þai dight hir in þe garmentes gay
þat sho had on þat oper day;
With gerlandes and with gleterand ² thing
Was sho made out of knawyng.

When al was done als it sold be,
Unto þe erl, his lord, went he.
'Sir,' he sayd, 'I wald þe pray
Of a ded þis ilk day:
þat þou wil gif me with þi hand
My leman, or ³ I pas þi lond,
þat I mai wed hir to my whife;
For with hir wil I lede my lyfe.'
He sayd he thocht to wed hir þan
þat had byfore ben his leman,
For luf of God and als for drede,
And for he sold þe better spede.
þe erl said: 'þat es gude scill,⁴
And als þou sais, syr, do I will.'

Sone þe erl cals knightes twa,
And bad þam sone þat þai sold ga
And feche þe lady unto þe kirk.
þai war redy his wil to wirk;
To kirk þai led þat faire lady.
A preste was revist ⁵ hastily.
þe erl come with meri chere,
Omang al þat folk in fere.⁶
His owin lady he toke bylive
And gaf þe knyght until his wive;
þe prest þam weddes swith sone.
And als tite als þe mes was done,

¹ ere⁴ reason⁵ hurried thither⁶ in company, together

þan was þare made grete menestrelsy
 And þe knight and his lady
 Went þam forth with grete solas
 To þe ship whare his godes in was.
 5 þe erl went with þam partill ;
 þe knight went yn with ful gude will
 þe lady stode still on þe sand ;
 þe erl toke hir by þe hand,
 And bad þe knyght sold hir take,
 10 Evermare to be his make.
 þare þe knyght toke þe lady,
 And said to þe erl : ' Sir, gramercy
 Of ¹ þis and of ¹ al oþer grace.'
 þus of þe erl hys leve he tase ;
 15 þe wind blew, þai went þaire way.
 þus lost þe erl his whife for ay ;
 He gaf hir þus þe knyght to wed ;
 þarfore ful sari life he led.
 When þe knight was went with þe lady,
 20 þe erl wendes hame hastily ;
 Until þe toure þe way he tase,
 To tel his lady how it was,
 And how he had his knyght cunvayd ² ;
 He trowed noght how he was bitraid.
 25 Until his toure þus wendes he right,
 For to speke with his lady bright.
 Into þe chamber ³ gan he ga,
 And loked about, bath to and fra ;
 He saw no syght of his lady ;
 30 þarfore sone he wex sary.
 Of hir cowth he nothing here ;
 þan he wepid with sari chere.
 Unto himself he gan him mene ⁴
 þat al was soth als he had sene.

DAME SIRITH

pan wist he it was his lady .
 pat at þe mete was set him by .
 To wax wise þan he bigan ;
 þarfore blamed him moni a man.

DAME SIRITH

Dame Sirith is preserved in Digby MS. 86, which has been assigned to date between 1272 and 1283, but by some as late as 1300.

With respect to the introduction of such fabliaux into England, Jusserand says (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 225): "Merry England" became acquainted with every form of French fabliaux. Nothing could be less congenial to the Anglo-Saxon race than the spirit of the fabliaux. This spirit, however, was acclimatized in England; and, like several other products of the French mind, was grafted on the original stock. The tree thus bore fruit which would ever have ripened as it did, without the Conquest. Such are the works of haucer, of Swift perhaps, and of Sterne. The most comic and *risqué* stories, those same stories meant to raise a laugh which we have seen old women tell parlor windows, in order to cheer recluse anchoresses, were put into English verse, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Thus we find in an English form such stories as the tale of "La Chienne qui pleure" (*Dame Sirith*), etc.

With respect to *Dame Sirith*, Ker says (*English Literature: Medieval*, p. 172): "This is far above the ordinary level of such things; it is a shameful practical joke, but there is more in it than this; the character of *Dame Sirith*, in her machinations to help the distressed lover of his neighbour's wife, is such as belongs to comedy and to satire, not to the ordinary vulgar 'merry tale.'"

The germ of the story has been traced back to India, where a belief in metempsychosis is prevalent, and thence passes on to the Persian (*Book of Sindibad*), the Arabic (see Clouston's *Book of Sindibad*, pp. 162 ff.) and the Hebrew (*Mischle Sindbad*, tr. Cassel, pp. 268 ff.). About 1100 it is found in the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alphonsus, a converted Spanish Jew, with which compare *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. 28 (of the Latin). The English version here printed bears a rather close resemblance to that in the Greek *Syntipas* (ed. Eberhard, *Fabulae Romanenses Graece Conscripae*, Leipzig, 1879). For other versions, and the transmission of the story in general, see Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* 1. 103-5; Elsner, *Untersuchungen zu dem Mittelenglischen Fabliau 'Dame Siriz'*, Berlin, 1877; McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (Boston, 1913), pp. xxi-xxxvii, 83-5. This tale has many points of resemblance with a fragmentary interlude printed below (pp. 477-80). It has been conjectured that both have a common

source in an interlude now lost (see Heuser, in *Anglia*, Vol. 30, and McKnight, pp. xxxviii-ix).

The name of the old woman is sometimes found in the manuscript as *Siriz* (147 25, 148 4, 157 6, 8) and sometimes as *Sirib* (150 7, 151 28, 153 1), but the rhymes show that the latter is undoubtedly correct (151 28; cf. 148 4); *wib* is similarly written *wiz* (148 5).

Ci comence le fabel et la cointise, de Dame Siriz

As I com bi an waie,
 Hof¹ on ich herde saie,
 Ful modi² mon and proud;
 Wis he wes of lore,
 And gouplich³ under gore,⁴
 And cloped in fair sroud.⁵

To lovien he bigon
 On⁶ wedded wimmon —
 þerof he hevede wrong;
 His herte hire⁷ wes alon,
 þat reste nevede⁸ he non,
 þe love wes so strong.

Wel gerne⁹ he him biþoute¹⁰
 Hou he hire gete moute,¹¹
 In ani cunnes¹² wise.¹³
 þat befel on an day
 þe loverd wend away
 Hon his marchaundise.¹⁴

He wente him to pen inne
 þer¹⁵ hoe¹⁶ wonede inne,
 þat wes riche won¹⁷;

¹ of
² haughty
³ goodly
⁴ raiment
⁵ apparel
⁶ a

⁷ to her
⁸ had not
⁹ intently
¹⁰ considered
¹¹ might
¹² kind

¹³ way
¹⁴ trafficking
¹⁵ where
¹⁶ she
¹⁷ dwelling

And com into þen halle,
 þer hoe wes srud¹ wip palle,²
 And þus he bigon :

[*Wilekin*] 'God almighty be herinne !'

[*Margeri*] 'Welcome, so ich ever bide winne³ !'

5

Quod þis wif.
 'His hit⁴ þi wille, com and site,
 And wat is þi wille let me wite,
 Mi leve lif.

Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,
 If I mai don ani þing
 þat þe is lef,
 þou myght finden me ful fre ;
 Fol blepeli will I don for þe,
 Wiphouten gref.'

10

15

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, God þe forȝelde⁶ !

Bote on þat⁶ þou me nout bimelede,⁷
 Ne make þe wroþ,
 Min hernde⁸ will I to þe bede⁹ ;
 Bote wrappen¹⁰ þe for ani dede¹¹
 Were me loþ.'

20

[*Margeri*] 'Nai, iwis, Wilekin !

For noþing þat ever is min,
 þau¹² þou hit ȝirne,¹³
 Houncurteis¹⁴ ne will I be ;
 Ne con¹⁵ I nout on¹⁶ viltē,¹⁷
 Ne nout I nelle lerne.

25

¹ clothed

² rich cloth

³ expect (eternal) happiness ;

MS. wenne

⁴ if it is

⁵ repay

⁶ on condition that

⁷ betray

⁸ errand

⁹ make known

¹⁰ anger

¹¹ in any way

¹² though

¹³ desire

¹⁴ discourteous

¹⁵ know

¹⁶ of

¹⁷ churlishness

source in an interlude now lost (see Heuser, in *Anglia*, Vol. 30, and McKnight, pp. xxxviii-ix).

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 þerof he hevede wrong;
 His herte hire⁷ wes alon,
 þat reste nevede⁸ he non,
 þe love wes so strong.

Wel zerne⁹ he him bioute¹⁰
 Hou he hire gete moute,¹¹
 In ani cunnes¹² wise.¹³
 þat befel on an day
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¹ of
² haughty
³ goodly
⁴ raiment
⁵ apparel
⁶ a

⁷ to her
⁸ had not
⁹ intently
¹⁰ considered
¹¹ might
¹² kind

¹³ way
¹⁴ trafficking
¹⁵ where
¹⁶ she
¹⁷ dwelling

And com into þen halle,
 þer hoe wes srud ¹ wip palle,²
 And þus he bigon :

[*Wilekin*] ' God almighty be herinne ! '

[*Margerit*] ' Welcome, so ich ever bide winne ³ ! ' 5

Quod þis wif.

' His hit ⁴ þi wille, com and site,
 And wat is þi wille let me wite,
 Mi leve lif.

Bi houre Loverd, hevene King, 10

If I mai don ani þing

þat þe is lef,

þou myght finden me ful fre ;

Fol blepeli will I don for þe,

Wiphouten gref.' 15

[*Wilekin*] ' Dame, God þe forzelde ⁶ !

Bote on þat ⁶ þou me nout bimelede,⁷

Ne make þe wroþ,

Min hernde ⁸ will I to þe bede ⁹ ;

Bote wrappen ¹⁰ þe for ani dede ¹¹ 20

Were me loþ.'

[*Margerit*] ' Nai, iwis, Wilekin !

For noþing þat ever is min,

þau ¹² þou hit girne,¹³

Houncurteis ¹⁴ ne will I be ; 25

Ne con ¹⁵ I nout on ¹⁶ vilte,¹⁷

Ne nout I nelle lerne.

¹ clothed

² rich cloth

³ expect (eternal) happiness ;

MS. wenne

⁴ if it is

⁵ repay

⁶ on condition that

⁷ betray

⁸ errand

⁹ make known

¹⁰ anger

¹¹ in any way

¹² though

¹³ desire

¹⁴ discourteous

¹⁵ know

¹⁶ of

¹⁷ churlishness

þou mai[3]t saien al þine wille,
And I shal herkennen and sitten stille,
þat¹ þou have told.

And if þat þou me tellest skil,²
I shal don after þi wil —
þat be þou bold.³

And þau þou saie me ani same,⁴
Ne shal I þe nouȝt blame
For þi sawe.⁵

[*Wilekin*] 'Nou Ich have wonne leve,⁶
Ȝif þat I þe⁷ shulde greve,
Hit were hounlawe.⁸

Certes, dame, þou seist as hende,⁹
And I shal setten spel¹⁰ on ende,
And tellen þe al —
Wat Ich wolde, and wi Ich com;
Ne con Ich saien non falsdom,
Ne non I ne shal.

Ich habbe iloved þe moni ger,
þau Ich nabbe nout ben her
Mi love to schowe.
Wile þi loverd is in tounne,
Ne mai no mon wiþ þe holden rounne
Wiþ no þewe.¹²

Ȝurstendai¹³ Ich herde saie,
As Ich wende bi þe waie,
Of oure sire¹⁴;

¹ till² what is reasonable³ confident, certain⁴ shame⁵ speech⁶ gained permission⁷ MS. me⁸ wrong⁹ a courteous one¹⁰ discourse

DAME SIRITH

Me¹ tolde me þat he was gon
To þe feire of Botolfston²
In Lincolneschire.

And for Ich weste³ þat he wes⁴ houte,
þarfore Ich am I igon aboute
To speken wip þe.
Him burp⁶ to liken wel his lif,
þat migtte welde⁶ secc⁷ a wif⁸
In privitye.

Dame, if hit is þi wille,
Boþ dernelike⁹ and stille
Ich wille þe love.
[Margeri] 'þat wold I don for non þin[g],
Bi houre Loverd, hevene King,
þat ous is bove¹⁰!

Ich habe mi loverd þat is mi spouse,
þat maiden broute me to house
Mid menske¹¹ inou¹²;
He loveþ me and Ich him wel,
Oure love is also trewe as stel,
Wiphouten wou.¹³

þau he be from hom on his hernde,
Ich were ounseli,¹⁴ if Ich lernede
To ben on¹⁵ hore.
þat ne shal nevere be,
þat I shal don selk falsete,
On bedde ne on flore;

⁶ possess
⁷ such
⁸ MS. wif
⁹ secretly
¹⁰ above

¹¹ honor
¹² enow, enough
¹³ wrong
¹⁴ wicked
¹⁵ a

Never more his lifwile,¹
 Thau he were on hondred mile
 Bigende Rome,
 For no þing ne shuld I take
 Mon on erþe to ben mi make,²
 Ar³ his hom-come.'

[*Wilekin*] ' Dame, dame, torn⁴ þi mod⁵;
 þi curteisi was ever god,
 And zet shal be;
 For þe Loverd þat ous haveþ wrout,
 Amend þi mod, and torn þi þout,
 And rew⁶ on me.'

[*Margerit*] ' We,⁷ we! [h]oldest þou me a fol?
 So Ich ever mote biden Ȝol,⁸
 þou art ounwis.
 Mi þout ne shalt þou never⁹ wende;
 Mi loverd is curteis mon and hende,
 And mon of pris;
 And Ich am wif boþe god and trewe;
 Trewe womon mai¹⁰ no mon cnowe
 þen Ich am.
 þilke time shal¹¹ never bitide
 þat mon, for wouing ne þoru prude,¹²
 Shal do me scham.'

[*Wilekin*] ' Swete levmon,¹³ merci!
 Same ne vilani
 Ne bede I þe non;

¹ lifetime
² mate
³ ere
⁴ change
⁵ mind

⁶ have compassion
⁷ alas
⁸ Yule, Christmas
⁹ MS. newer
¹⁰ MS. ne mai

¹¹ MS. ne shal
¹² pride
¹³ MS. lenmon, or leumon (?)

Bote derne love I þe bede,
 As mon þat wolde of love speðe,
 And fi[n]de won.¹

[*Margeri*] 'So bide Ich evere mete oþer drinke,
 Her þou lesest al þi swinke.²
 Þou miȝt gon hom, leve broþer,
 For [ne] wille Ich þe love, ne non oþer
 Bote mi wedde houssebonde;
 To tellen hit þe ne wille Ich wonde.³

[*Wilekin*] 'Certes, dame, þat me forþinkeþ⁴;
 An[d] wo is þe mon þa[t] muchel swinkeþ,
 And at þe laste leseþ his sped!
 To maken menis⁵ his⁶ him ned;
 Bi⁷ me I saie [hit] ful iwis,
 Þat love þe — love þat I shal mis.
 An[d], dame, have nou godne dai!
 And þilke Loverd þat al welde⁸ mai
 Leve⁹ þat þi þout so tourne
 Þat Ich¹⁰ for þe no leng¹¹ ne mourne.'

Drerimod¹² he wente awai,
 And þoute boþe niȝt and dai
 Hire al for to wende.
 A frend him radde¹³ for to fare —
 And leven al his muchele kare —
 To Dame Sirip¹⁴ þe hende.

Þider he wente him anon,
 So suiþe¹⁵ so he miȝtte gon,
 No mon he ni mette.

joy
 toil
 hesitate, fear
 I am sorry for that
 moans

6 is
 7 about
 8 wield
 9 grant
 10 MS. Ihe

11 longer
 12 sad in heart
 13 counseled
 14 MS. Siriz
 15 quickly

Ful he wes of tene¹ and treie²;
 Mid wordes mikle and eke sleie³
 Faire he hire grette.

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe iblessi, Dame Sirip⁴!

5 Ich am icom to speken þe with,⁵
 For ful muchele nede;
 And⁶ Ich mai have help of þe,
 þou shalt have, þat þou shalt se,
 Ful riche mede.'

10 [*Sirith*] 'Welcomen art þou, leve sone;
 And if Ich mai oper cone⁷
 In eni wise for þe do,
 I shal strengþen me þerto;
 Forþi,⁸ leve sone, tel þou me
 15 Wat þou woldest I dude for þe.'

[*Wilekin*] 'Bote, leve nelde,⁹ ful evele I fare;
 I lede mi lif wiþ tene and kare;

20 Wiþ muchel hounsele¹⁰ ich lede mi lif,
 And pat is for on suete wif
 þat heigtte Margeri.
 Ich have iloved hire moni dai,
 And of hire love hoe seiz me nai;
 Hider Ich com forþi.

25 Bote-if¹¹ hoe wende hire mod,
 For serewe¹² mon¹³ Ich wakese¹⁴ wod,
 Oper miselve quelle.¹⁵
 Ich hevede ipout miself to slo¹⁶;
 Forþen¹⁷ radde¹⁸ a frend me go
 To þe, mi sereue telle.

¹ vexation

² grief

³ shrewd

⁴ MS. Siriz

⁵ MS. wiz

⁶ if

⁷ or know how to (can)

⁸ therefore

⁹ old lady

¹⁰ misfortune

¹¹ unless

¹² sorrow

¹⁷ theref

¹⁸ advise

He saide me, wiphouten faille
 þat þou me coupest helpe and vaile,¹
 And bringen me of wo,
 þoru þine crafftes and þine dedes;
 And Ich wile geve þe riche mede[s],
 Wip þat² hit be so.'

5

[*Sirith*] 'Benedicite be herinne³!

Her havest þou, sone, mikel sinne.⁴
 Loverd, for his suete name,⁵
 Lete þe þefore haven no shame⁶!
 þou servest affter Godes grame,⁷
 Wen þou seist on me silk⁸ blame;
 For Ich am old and sek and lame;
 Seknesse haveþ maked me ful tame.
 Blesse þe, blesse þe, leve knave,⁹
 Leste þou mesaventer have
 For þis lesing¹⁰ þat is founden¹¹
 Oppon me, þat am harde ibo[u]nden!
 Ich am on holi wimon,
 On wicchecraftt nout I ne con,
 Bote wip gode men[s] almesdede
 Ilke dai mi lif I fede,
 And bidde mi Pater Noster and mi Crede,
 þat Goed hem helpe at hore¹² nede
 þat helpen me mi lif to lede,
 And leve þat hem mote wel spede.
 His lif and his soule worþe ishend¹³
 þat þe to me þis hernde haveþ send;

10

15

20

25

¹ avail, assist

² provided that

³ blessing be herein = God
 save us (an exclamation
 of surprise)

⁴ sin; MS. senne

⁵ MS. nome

⁶ MS. shome

⁷ anger; MS. grome

⁸ such

⁹ boy

¹⁰ lie

¹¹ invented

¹² their

¹³ disgraced

7. Flügel (*Matske Mem. Vol.*, p. 95) prefers 'Benedicite! be herinne!' understanding 'God' as the subject of (opt. or imp.) 'be.'

9. Note the six rhyming lines, like the six below (21-26).

And leve me to ben iwreken¹
On him þis shome me haveþ speken.²

[*Wilekin*] 'Leve nelde, bilef³ al þis;
Me þinkeþ þa[t] þou art onwis.
5 þe mon þat me to þe taute,⁴
He weste þat þou hous⁴ coupest saute.⁵
Help, Dame Sirip, if þou maut,⁶
To make me wiþ þe sucking saut,
And Ich wille geve þe gift ful stark⁷:
10 Moni a pound and moni a marke,
Warme pilche⁸ and warme shon,
Wiþ þat min hernde be wel don.
Of muchel godlec⁹ miȝt þou zelpe,¹⁰
If hit be so þat þou me helpe.'

15 [*Sirith*] 'Liȝ me nout, Wilekin, bi þi leute.¹¹
Is hit þin herness¹² þou tekest¹³ me?
Lovest þou wel Dame Margeri?'

[*Wilekin*] 'Ȝe, nelde, witerli,¹⁴
20 Ich hire love! Hit mot me spille¹⁵
Bote ich gete hire to mi wille.'

[*Sirith*] 'Wat, god Wilekin, me rewep þi scape¹⁶;
Houre Loverd sende þe help rape¹⁷!

Weste Hic hit miȝtte ben forholen,¹⁸
Me wolde punche wel solen¹⁹
25 þi wille for to fellen.²⁰
Make me siker wiþ word on honde

¹ avenged

² leave

³ directed

⁴ us

⁵ reconcile, bring to terms

⁶ canst

⁷ strong, large

⁸ fur garments

⁹ goodness, benefit

¹⁰ boast

¹¹ loyalty

¹² earnest

¹³ teachest

¹⁴ truly, certainly

¹⁵ destroy, ruin

¹⁶ harm

¹⁷ soon (early)

¹⁸ concealed

¹⁹ proper (solemn)

²⁰ MS. fullen

þat þou wolt helen,¹ and I wile fonde²
If Ich mai hire tellen.

For al þe world ne wold I nout
þat Ich were to chapitre³ ibroun

For none selke⁴ werkes.

Mi jugement were sone ȝiven —
To ben wip shome somer-driven⁵
Wip⁶ prestes and with clarkes.⁷

5

[*Wilekin*] ' Iwis, nelde, ne wold I

þat þou hevedest vilani

10

Ne shame, for mi goed.

Her I þe mi trouþe pligtte,

Ich shal helen bi⁷ mi migtte,

Bi þe holi roed ! '

[*Sirith*] ' Welcome, Wilekin, hiderward !

15

Her havest imaked a foreward⁸

þat þe mai ful wel like.

þou maigt⁹ blesse pilke sip,¹⁰

For þou maigt make þe ful bliþ ;

Dar¹¹ þou namore sike.¹²

20

To goderhele¹³ ever come þou hider,

For sone will I gange þider,

And maken hire hounderstonde.

I shal kenne¹⁴ hire sulke a lore

þat hoe shal lovien þe mikel more

25

þen ani mon in londe.⁷

[*Wilekin*] ' Al so hav I Godes griþ,¹⁵

Wel havest þou said, Dame Siriþ,

And goderhele shal ben þin.

conceal (it)

try

ecclesiastical court

such

sumpter-driven (slung
on a pack-animal) ?

⁶ by

⁷ according to

⁸ agreement

⁹ mayst

¹⁰ this opportunity

¹¹ needest (= þar, from OE. *þearf*)

¹² sigh

¹³ for good fortune

¹⁴ make known, teach

¹⁵ peace

Have her twenti shiling :
 þis Ich zeve þe to meding,¹
 To buggen² þe sep³ and swin.'

[*Sirith*] ' So Ich evere brouke⁴ hous oper flet,⁵
 5 Neren never penes⁶ beter biset
 þen þes shulen ben.
 For I shal don a juperti,⁷
 And a ferli⁸ maistri⁹;
 þat þou shalt ful wel sen.—

10 [*To her dog*] Pepir¹⁰ nou shalt þou ete,¹¹
 þis mustart shal ben þi mete,
 And gar¹² þin eien to renne¹³;
 I shal make a lesing
 Of þin heie-renning,
 15 Ich wot wel wer and wenne.'

[*Wilekin*] ' Wat! nou const þou no god?
 Me pinkeþ þat þou art wod.
 Zevest þo þe welpe¹⁴ mustard?'

[*Sirith*] ' Be stille, boinard¹⁵!
 20 I shal mit¹⁶ þis ilke gin¹⁷
 Gar hire love to ben al þin.
 Ne shal ich never have reste ne ro¹⁸
 Til ich have told þou þou shalt do.
 Abid me her til min hom-come.'

25 [*Wilekin*] ' Jus,¹⁹ bi þe somer blome,²⁰
 Hepen²¹ null I ben binomen,²²
 Til þou be agein comen.'

1 reward
 2 buy
 3 sheep
 4 enjoy
 5 hall (*lit.* floor)
 6 pence
 7 venture
 8 wondrous

9 trick
 10 MS. pepis
 11 MS. eten
 12 make
 13 run; MS. rene
 14 whelp
 15 fool
 16 with

17 contrivance
 18 quiet
 19 yes
 20 bloom
 21 hence
 22 taken away

Dame Sirij bigon to go
 As a wrecche þat is wo,
 þat¹ hoe come hire to þen inne²
 þer þis gode wif wes inne.
 þo hoe to þe dore com,
 Swiþe reuliche³ hoe bigon:

[*Sirith*] ' Loverd,' hoe scij, ' wo is holde⁴ wives,
 þat in poverte ledeþ ay [hore]⁵ lives;
 Not⁶ no mon so muchel of pine
 As poure wif þat falleþ in ansine⁷;
 þat mai ilke mon bi me wite,
 For mai I nouþer gange ne site;
 Ded wold I ben ful fain.
 Hounger and þurst me haveþ nei slain;
 Ich ne mai mine limes onwold,⁸
 For mikel hounger and þurst and cold.
 Warto liveth selke a wrecche?
 Wi nul⁹ Goed mi soule fecche? '

[*Margeri*] ' Seli¹⁰ wif, God þe hounbinde¹¹!
 To dai wille I þe mete finde,
 For love of Goed.
 Ich have reuþe of þi wo,
 For euele icloþed I se þe go,
 And euele ishoed;

Com herin, Ich wile þe fede.'

[*Sirith*] ' Goed almiȝtten do þe mede,
 And þe Loverd þat wes on rode idon,¹²
 And faste fourti daus¹³ to non,¹⁴
 And hevene and erþe haveþ to welde,
 As þilke Loverd þe forȝelde.¹⁵ '

¹ until
² dwelling
³ piteously
⁴ old
⁵ See 149 24

⁶ knows not
⁷ want
⁸ control
⁹ will not
¹⁰ good

¹¹ unbind, pardon
¹² destroyed
¹³ days
¹⁴ noon
¹⁵ requite

[*Margeri*] 'Have her fles¹ and eke bred,
And make þe glad, hit is mi red²;
And have her þe coppe wip þe drinke;
Goed do þe mede for þi swinke.'

5 þenne spac þat holde wif —
Crist awarie³ hire lif! —
[*Sirith*] 'Alas! alas! þat ever I live!
Al þe sunne Ich wolde forgive
þe mon þat smite of⁴ min heved!
10 Ich wolde mi lif me were bireved!'

[*Margeri*] 'Seli wif, what eilleþ þe?'

[*Sirith*] 'Bote eþe⁵ mai I sori be:
Ich hevede a douter feir and fre,⁶
Feiror ne miztte no mon se.
15 Hoe hevede a curteis hossebonde,
Freour⁷ mon miztte no mon fonde.⁸
Mi douter lovede him al to wel;
Forþi⁹ mak I sori del.¹⁰
Oppon a dai he was out wend,
20 And þarþoru¹¹ wes mi douter shend.
He hede on ernde out of toun;e;
And com a modi¹² clarc wip croune,¹³
To mi douter his love beed,
And hoe nolde nout folewe his red.
25 He ne miztte his wille have,
For no þing he miztte crave;
þenne bigon þe clerc to wiche,¹⁴
And shop¹⁵ mi douter til a biche.
þis is mi douter þat Ich of speke;

¹ flesh, meat

² advice

³ curse

⁴ off

⁵ easily

⁶ noble

⁷ nobler

⁸ search out

⁹ on this account

¹⁰ lament

¹¹ by this means, thereby

¹² proud

¹³ tonsure

¹⁴ use witchcraft

¹⁵ transformed (shaped)

For del of hire min herte breke.
 Loke hou hire heien greten,¹
 On hire cheken þe teres meten.²
 Forþi, dame, were hit no wonder,
 þau min herte burste assunder. 5
 A[nd] wose ever is ȝong houssewif,
 Ha ³ loveþ ful luitel hire lif,
 And ⁴ eni clerc of love hire bede,
 Bote ⁵ hoe grante, and lete him spede.⁷

[*Margeri*] 'A, Loverd Crist! wat mai [I] þenne do? 10
 þis enderdai ⁶ com a clarc me to,
 And bed ⁷ me love on his manere,
 And Ich him nolde nout ihere.
 Ich trouue he wolde me forsape.⁸
 Hou troustu,⁹ nelde, Ich moue ascape?' 15

[*Sirith*] 'God almytten be þin help
 þat þou ne be nouþer bicche ne welþ!
 Leve dame, if eni clerc
 Bedeþ þe þat love-werc,
 Ich rede þat þou grante his bone,¹⁰ 20
 And bicom his lefmon sone.
 And if þat þou so ne dost,
 A worse red þou ounderfost.¹¹'

[*Margeri*] 'Loverd Crist, þat me is wo,
 þat þe clarc me hede ¹² fro 25
 Ar he me hevede biwonne!
 Me were levere þen ani fe ¹³
 That he hevede enes ¹⁴ leien bi me,
 And eftsones ¹⁵ bigunne.

¹ shed tears² meet³ she⁴ if⁵ unless⁶ the other day⁷ offered⁸ transform⁹ thinkest thou, believest thou¹⁰ request (boon)¹¹ receivest, takest¹² went¹³ property¹⁴ once¹⁵ again

Evermore, nelde, ich wille be þin,
 Wij þat¹ þou feche me Willekin,
 þe clarc of wam I telle;
 Giftes will I geve þe
 5 þat þou maigt ever þe betere be,
 Bi Godes hounne belle!

[*Sirith*] 'Sopliche, mi swete dame,
 And if I mai wiþhoute blame,
 Fain Ich wille ffonde;
 10 And if Ich mai wij him mete
 Bi eni wei oþer bi strete,
 Nout ne will I wonde.'

Have god dai, dame! forþ will I go.'
 [*Margeri*] 'Allegate³ loke þat þou do so
 15 As Ich þe bad;
 Bote þat þou me Wilekin bringe,
 Ne mai [I] never lawe⁴ ne singe,
 Ne be glad.'

[*Sirith*] 'Iwis, dame, if I mai,
 20 Ich wille bringen him zet to-dai,
 Bi mine migtte.'
 Hoe wente hire to hire inne,
 Her hoe founde Wilekinne,
 Bi houre Drigtte⁵!

[*Sirith*] 'Swete Wilekin, be þou nout dred,
 25 For of þin her[n]de Ich have wel sped.
 Swipe com for[þ] þider wij me,
 For hoe haveþ send affter þe;

¹ provided that
² hesitate

³ in every way, by all means
⁴ laugh

⁵ our Lord

6 belle: sacring bell, used in the mass; see *Seven Sages* (Percy Soc. 16),
 l. 2285: 'By Goddis belle.'

Iwis nou maigt þou ben above,
For þou havest grantise¹ of hire love.²

[*Wilekin*] 'God þe forgelde, leve nelde,
þat hevene and erþe haveþ to welde!'

þis modi mon bigon to gon 5
Wip Sirip² to his levemon
In þilke stounde.³
Dame Sirip² bigon to telle,
And swor bi Godes ouene belle,
Hoe hevede him founde. 10

[*Sirith*] 'Dame, so have ich Wilekin sout,
For nou have Ich him ibroust.'

[*Margeri*] 'Welcome, Wilekin, swete þing,
þou art welcomore þen þe king.

Wilekin þe swete, 15
Mi love I þe bihete,
To don al þine wille.
Turnd Ich have mi þout,
For I ne wolde nout
þat þou þe shuldest spille.' 20

[*Wilekin*] 'Dame, so Ich evere bide noen,⁴
And Ich am redi and iboen⁵
To don al þat þou saie.
Nelde, par ma fai!⁶
þou most gange awai, 25
Wile Ich and hoe shulen plaic.' . . .⁷

[*Sirith*] 'And wose is onwis,
 And for non pris
 Ne con geten his leuemon.
 I shal, for mi mede,
 Garen him to spede,
 For ful wel I con.'

5

ROBIN HOOD AND THE MONK

This poem, though unmistakably a ballad, tells a story, and is therefore here classed as a tale, though perhaps it has nearly equal claim to be called a romance. It is one of the few ballads of whose early date we are assured, the manuscript being of about 1450. It is No. 119 of Child's great collection (3. 94-101); see also Sargent and Kittredge's edition in one volume, pp. 282-6. I omit stanzas 30-8, 53-66, both inclusive, and the end, stanzas 83-90. There is an unfortunate break after the first two lines of stanza 30, due to the loss of a sheet of the manuscript.

What Gummere says of ballads in general (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 474; the whole chapter should be read) is true of this in particular: 'They give a hint of primitive and unspoiled poetic sensation. . . . They can tell a good tale. They are fresh with the open air; wind and sunshine play through them.' For myself, I may add that the two opening stanzas of this ballad seem to me of peculiar loveliness.

In somer, when þe shawes¹ be sheyne,²
 And leues be large and long,
 Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
 To here þe foulys song;

10

To se þe dere draw to þe dale,
 And leue þe hilles hee,
 And shadow hem in þe leues grene,
 Under the grenewode tre.

15

Hit befel on Whitsontide,
 Erly in a May mornynge,
 The son up feyre can³ shyne,
 And the briddis mery can syng.

¹ thickets, groves

² beautiful

'This is a mery mornynge,' seid Litull John,
 'Be hym þat dyed on tre;
 A more mery man þen I am one
 Lyves not in Cristiante.¹

Pluk up þi hert, my dere mayster,'
 Litull John can sey,
 'And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
 In a mornynge of May.'

'Ȝe,² on thyng greves me,' seid Robyn,
 'And does my hert mych woo;
 þat I may not no solem day
 To mas nor matyns goo.

Hit is a fourtnet and more,' seid he,
 'Syn I my Savyour³ see;
 To-day wil I to Notyngham,' seid Robyn,
 'With þe myght of mylde Marye.'

Than spake Moche,⁴ þe mylner⁵ sun —
 Ever more wel hym betyde!
 'Take twelve of þi wyght⁶ gemen,⁷
 Well weppynd, be þi side.
 Such on wolde þiselfe slon,
 þat twelve dar not abyde.⁸

'Of all my mery men,' seid Robyn,
 'Be my feith I wil non have,
 But Litull John shall beyre my bow,
 Til þat me list to drawe.'

¹ Christendom² yea³ consecrated wafer or host⁴ Much⁵ miller's⁶ sturdy⁷ yeomen⁸ withstand

'pou shall beyre þin own,' seid Litull Jo[h]n,
'Maister, and I wyl beyre myne.
And we well shete a peny,¹' seid Litull Jo[h]n
'Under þe grenewode lyne.²'

5 'I wil not shete a peny,' seyde Robyn Hode.
'In feith, Litull John, with the,
But ever for on as³ pou shetis,' seide Robyn,
'In feith I holde þe thre.'

10 Thus shet þei forth, pese zemen too,
Bothe at buske⁴ and brome,⁵
Til Litull John wan of his maister
Five shillings to⁶ hose and shone.

A ferly⁷ strife fel þem betwene,
As they went bi the wey;
15 Litull John seid he had won five shillings,
And Robyn Hode seid shortly, 'Nay.'

With þat Robyn Hode lyed⁸ Litul Jo[h]n,
And smote hym with his hande;
Litul Jo[h]n waxed wroth þerwith,
20 And pulled out his bright bronde.

'Were pou not my maister,' seid Litull John,
'pou shuldis by⁹ hit ful sore;
Get þe a man wher pou w[ilt],
For pou getis me no more.'

25 þen Robyn goes to Notyngham,
Hymselfe mornyng¹⁰ allone,
And Litull John to mery Scherwode—
The pathes he knew ilkone.

¹ shoot for a penny

² lime, linden

³ that

⁴ bush

⁵ broom

⁶ for

⁷ fierce

⁸ gave the lie to

Whan Robyn came to Notyngham,
 Sertenly withouten layn,¹
 He prayed to God and myld Mary
 To bryng hym out save² agayn.

He gos into Seynt Mary chirch,
 And kneled down before the rode³;
 Alle þat ever were þe church within
 Beheld wel Robyn Hode.

Beside hym stod a gret-hedid munke,
 I pray to God woo he be!
 Fful sone he knew gode Robyn,
 As sone as he hym se.

Out at þe durre he ran,
 Fful sone and anon;
 Alle þe gatis of Notyngham
 He made to be sparred everychon.

'Rise up,' he seid, 'þou prowde schereff,
 Buske⁴ þe and make þe bowne⁵;
 I have spyed þe kynggis felon,
 Fforsothe he is in þis town.

I have spyed þe false felon,
 As he stondis at his masse;
 Hit is long of⁶ þe,' seide þe munke,
 'And⁷ ever he fro us passe.

Þis traytur name is Robyn Hode,
 Under þe grenewode lynde⁸;
 He robbyt me onys of a hundred pound,
 Hit shalle never out of my mynde.'

¹ lying
² safe
³ cross

⁴ prepare
⁵ ready
⁶ through, by means of

⁷ if
⁸ linden

Up þen rose þis prowde shereff,
 And radly¹ made hym zare²;
 Many was þe moder son
 To þe kyrk with hym can fare.

5 In at þe dures þei throly³ thrast,⁴
 With staves ful gode wone⁵;
 'Alas, alas!' seid Robyn Hode,
 'Now mysse I Litull John.'

10 But Robyn toke out a too-hond sworde,
 Þat hangit down be his kne;
 Þer as þe schereff and his men stode thyckust,
 Theþurwarde wolde he.

15 Thryes thorowout þem he ran þen,
 Forsoþe, as I yow sey,
 And woundyt mony a moder son,
 And twelve he slew þat day.

20 His sworde upon þe schireff hed
 Sertanly he brake in too;
 'Þe smyth þat þe made,' seid Robyn,
 'I pray God⁶ wyrke hym woo!

Ffor now am I weppynlesse,' seid Robyn,
 'Alasse! agayn my wylle;
 But-if I may fle þese traytors fro,
 I wot þei wil me kyll.'

There is a break in the manuscript two lines after this point, but it is evident from what follows that Robin Hood's men in some way learn of his capture. All of them are utterly distracted by this news save Little John, who feels sure that 'our Lady' will care for her servant. He himself will see to the monk.

¹ quickly
² ready

³ stoutly
⁴ thrust

⁵ number
⁶ MS. to God

Litul John stode at a wyndow in þe mornynge,
And lokid forþ at a stage;
He was war wher þe munke came ridyng,
And with hym a litul page.

'Be my feith,' seid Litul John to Moch,
'I can þe tel tithyngus¹ gode;
I se wher þe munke cumys rydyng,
I know hym be his ryde hode.'

They went into the way, þese gemen boþe,
As curtes men and hende;
Þei spyrred² tithyngus at þe munke,
As they hade bene his frende.

Ffro whens come ge?' seid Litull Jo[h]n,
'Tel us tithyngus, I yow pray,
Off a false owtlay, [callid Robyn Hode,]
Was takyn gisterday.

He robbyt me and my felowes boþe
Of twenti marke in sertayn³;
If þat false owtlay be takyn,
Fforsoþe we wolde be fayn.'

'So did he me,' seid þe munke,
'Of a hundred pound and more;
I layde furst hande hym apon,
Ȝe may thonke me þerfore.'

'I pray God thanke you,' seid Litull John,
'And we wil when we may;
We wil go with you, with your leve,
And bryng yow on your way.'

Ffor Robyn Hode hase many a wilde felow,
I tell you in certayn¹;
If þei wist ȝe rode þis way,
In feith ȝe shulde be slayn.²

5 As þei went talking be þe way,
The munke and Litull John,
John toke þe munkis horse be þe hede
Fful sone and anon.

10 John² toke þe munkis horse be þe hed
Fforsoþe, as I yow say;
So did Much, þe litull page,
Ffor³ he shulde not scape away.

15 Be þe golett⁴ of þe hode
John pulled þe munke down;
John was nothyng of hym agast—
He lete hym falle on his crown.

20 Litull John was so[re] agrevyd,
And drew owt his swerde in hye⁶;
This munke saw he shulde be ded,
Lowd 'mercy!' can⁶ he crye.

'He was my maister,' seid Litull John
'þat þou hase browȝt in bale⁷;
Shalle þou never cum at our kyng,
Ffor to telle hym tale.'

25 John smote of þe munkis hed,
No longer wolde he dwell⁸;
So did Moch þe litull page,
Ffor ferd⁹ lest he wolde tell. . . .

¹ MS. certen

² MS. Johne

³ that

⁴ throat

⁶ haste

⁶ did

Little John and Much then carry to the king the letters taken from the monk's body, conveying the tidings of Robin's capture. The king rejoices at this news, gives the men twenty pounds as a reward, and makes them yeomen of the crown. He then bids Little John bear his privy seal to the sheriff of Nottingham, commanding that Robin Hood be brought to him, alive and uninjured.

The scheref made John gode chere,
And gaf hym wyne of the best;
At nyȝt þei went to her bedde,
And every man to his rest.

When þe scheref was on slepe,¹
Dronken of wyne and ale,
Litul John and Moch, forsoþe,
Toke þe way unto þe jale.

Litul John callid up þe jayler,
And bade hym rise anon;
He seyð Robyn Hode had brokyn prison,
And out of hit was gon.

The porter rose anon, sertan,
'As sone as he herd John calle;
Litul John was redy with a swerd,
And bare hym to þe walle.

'Now wil I be porter,' seid Litul John,
'And take þe keyes in honde';
He toke þe way to Robyn Hode,
And sone he hym unbonde.

He gaf hym a gode swerd in his hond,
His hed with for to kepe,²
And ther as þe walle was lowyst
Anon down can þei lepe.

¹ asleep

² to defend his head with

Be þat þe cok began to crow,
 The day began to spryng,
 The scheref fond þe jaylier ded,
 The comyn bell made he ryng.

5 He made a crye thoroout al þe tow[n],
 Wheder he be zoman or knave
 þat cowþe bryng hym Robyn Hode,
 His warison¹ he shuld have.

10 'Ffor I dar never,' said þe scheref,
 'Cum before oure kyng;
 Ffor if I do, I wot serten
 Fforsoþe he wil me heng.'

15 The scheref made to seke Notyngham,
 Bothe be strete and stye,²
 And Robyn was in mery Scherwode,
 As liȝt as lef on lynde.

Then bespake gode Litull John,
 To Robyn Hode can he say:
 20 'I have done þe a gode turne for an ev
 Quyte þe³ whan þou may.

'I have done þe a gode turne,' seid Lit
 'Fforsothe, as I yow say;
 I have brouȝt þe under grenewode lyn
 Ffarewel, and have gode day.'

25 'Nay, be my trouth,' seid Robyn Hode
 'So shall hit neuer be;
 I make þe maister,' seid Robyn Hode,
 'Off alle my men and me.'

¹ reward² lane

'Nay, be my trouth,' seid Litull John,
 'So shalle hit never be;
 But lat me be a felow,¹' seid Litull John,
 'No noder kepe I be.'²

Thus John gate Robyn Hod[e] out of prison,
 Sertan withoutyn layn³;
 Whan his men saw hym hol and sounde,
 Fforsothe they were full fayne.

They filled in wyne, and made hem glad,
 Under þe levys smale,
 And ȝete⁴ pastes of venyson,
 þat gode was with ale.

Eight stanzas remain. Word of the escape is carried to the king, who declares that, though Little John has beguiled both the sheriff and himself, he has been true to Robin Hood.

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

This is the poem from which Longfellow drew the Sicilian's tale, in the first series of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Leigh Hunt related the story in prose in his *Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* (1848); a play was founded on it in the reign of Henry VII, and acted at Chester in 1529 (Ward, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* 1. 93-4; Collier, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Poetry*, London, 1831, 1. 113-5; 2. 128, 415; Hazlitt, *Rem. Early Pop. Poetry*, London, 1864, 1. 264-88); and Rudolf Schmidt drew from it his drama, *Den Forvandlede Konge*, which appeared in 1876, and was several times played at Copenhagen. Closely allied to our Middle English poem is Jean de Condé's (fl. 1310-1340) *Li Dis dou Magnificat (Dits et Contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son Fils, Jean de Condé*, ed. Scheler, Brussels, 1866, 2. 355-70, 455 ff.). The former, however, has been influenced by the romance of *Robert the Devil* (cf. Varnhagen, *Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Berlin, 1884, pp. 43-7), from which the king's name, Robert, may come, together with certain traits of his life as fool; Robert the Devil, like the king, reaches Rome on Maundy Thursday.

The tale appears in numerous versions, European and Asiatic. One set of the European versions derives from the story of Jovinian in the *Gesta Romanorum*. Much earlier is the Jewish legend, which occurs in four versions (Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, Kabbala, etc.), one of which connects the story

¹ comrade² no other I care to be³ dissembling⁴ ate

with Jer. 9. 23, instead of with the Magnificat. On the Hebrew are founded an Arabic and a Turkish version, and the former, in turn, may have been influenced by the Hindoo belief in metempsychosis (see Varahagen, *op. cit.*, and his *Ein Indisches Märchen auf seiner Wanderung*, Berlin, 1882).

Our text (lines 90-199, 383-416) is taken from Horstmann, *Sammeln Altenglischer Legenden* (Heilbronn, 1878). The poem must be earlier than 1370, the approximate date of the Vernon manuscript.

The first part of the poem may be summarized as follows: King Robert of Sicily was brother to Pope Urban and Emperor Valmond (not historical); and was proud to think that he had no equal. On Midsummer Night (June 24) he went to vespers, and heard a verse of the Magnificat — *Deposuit potentes a sede, et exaltavit humiles* — which he made a clerk translate to him, and he scoffed at it. In church he fell asleep, and when vespers were over was left there alone, his place with the court being taken by an angel who assumed his appearance. At length the king wakes, cries out for his men, and is roughly accosted by the sexton, who, finally, thinking him to be mad, opens the church-door.

þe kyng bigan to renne out faste;

As a man þat was wod

At his paleys-gate he stod,

And het þe porter gadelyng,¹

And bad him come in hizzyng,²

Anon þe gates up³ to do.

þe porter seide: 'Ho⁴ clepeþ⁵ so?'

He answered riȝt anon:

'þou schalt witen,⁶ ar I gon:

þi lord I am, þou schalt knowe;

In prison þou schalt ligge⁷ lowe,

And ben honged and todrawe⁸

As a traytur, bi þe lawe;

þou schalt wel wite I am kyng.

Opene þe gates, gadelyng!

þe porter seide: 'So mot⁹ I þe,¹⁰

þe kyng is mid his meyne¹¹;

Wel I wot, wiþoute doute,

þe kyng nis nouȝt¹² now wiþoute.'

¹ knave

² haste

³ open

⁴ calleth

⁵ know

⁷ lie

⁹ ma

¹⁰ thr

¹¹ com

þe porter com into halle,
 Bifore þe newe kyng a ¹ knes gan falle,
 And seide : ' þer is atte ² ȝate
 A nyce ³ fol, ycome late ;
 He seiþ he is lord and kyng, 5
 And cleped me foule gadelyng.
 Lord, what wile ȝe þat I do —
 Lete him in, or lete him go ? '

þe angel seide in haste :
 ' Do him come in swiþe ⁴ faste ; 10
 For mi fol I wile him make,
 Forte ⁵ he þe name of kyng forsake.'

þe porter com to þe ȝate,
 And him called in — to late :
 He smot þe porter whan he com in, 15
 þat blod brast out of moup and chin.
 þe porter ȝeld ⁶ him his travayle —
 Him smot agen, wipouten fayle,
 þat nese and moup brast a ⁷ blod.
 þanne he ⁸ semed almost wod. 20
 þe porter and his men in haste
 Kyng Roberd in a podel ⁹ caste,
 Unsemely made his bodi þan,
 þat he nas lik non oþer man,
 And brouȝt him bifore þe newe kyng, 25
 And seide : ' Lord, þis gadelyng
 Me haþ smite wipoute desert ;
 He seiþ he is oure kyng apert ¹⁰ ;
 þis harlot ¹¹ ouȝte for his sawe ¹²
 Ben yhonged and todrawe, 30
 For he seiþ non oþer word
 Bote þat he is boþe kyng and lord.'

¹ on
² at the
³ silly
⁴ full

⁵ until
⁶ requited
⁷ with
⁸ King Robert

⁹ puddle
¹⁰ clearly
¹¹ rascal
¹² saying

þe angel seide to Kyng Robei
 'þou art a fol, þat art nougt ferc
 Mi men to do such vileynye;
 þi gult þou most nede abyen.²
 5 What art þou?' seide þe angel.
 Quap Roberd: 'þou schalt wite wel:
 I am kyng, and kyng wil be;
 Wiþ wronge³ þou hast mi dignite.
 þe Pope of Rome is mi broþer,
 10 And þe Emperour min oþer;
 þei wil me wreke,⁴ forsop to telle,
 I wot þei nille nougt longe dwelle.⁵
 'þou art mi fol,' seide þe angel;
 'þou schalt be schore⁶ everichdel⁷
 15 Lich a fol, a fol to be —
 Wher is now þi dignite?
 þi counseyler schal ben an ape,
 And o⁸ cloþyng zou⁹ worþ¹⁰ yschape¹¹
 I schal him cloþen as þi broþer,
 20 Of o cloþyng — hit nis non oþer;
 He schal be þin owne fere¹² —
 Sum wit of him þou miht lere.
 Houndes, howso hit falle,¹³
 Schulen ete wiþ þe in halle;
 25 þou schalt eten on þe ground;
 þin assayour¹⁴ schal ben an hound,
 To assaye þi mete bifore þe —
 Wher is now þi dignite?'
 He het a barbur him bifore,
 30 þat as a fol he schulde be schore
 Al around lich a frere,¹⁵
 An hondebrede bove eijer ere,

1 afraid
 2 expiate
 3 wrongfully
 4 avenge
 5 tarry

6 shorn
 7 in every respect
 8 one, the same
 9 for you both
 10 shall be

And on his croune make a crois.
 He gan crië and make nois:
 He swor þei schulde alle abyë
 þat him dude such vileynye,
 And ever he seide he was lord;
 And eche man scorned him for þat word,
 And eche man seide he was wod —
 þat proved wel he couþe no good.
 For he wende in none wise
 þat God almigti couþe devise
 Him to bringe to lower stat;
 Wiþ o draught¹ he was chekmat.
 Wiþ houndes everich nigȝt he lay,
 And ofte he cried welaway
 þat he ever was ybore,
 For he was a man forlore.
 þer nas in court grom ne page
 þat of þe kyng ne made rage,²
 For no man ne migte him knowe:
 He was defigured in a þrowe.³
 So lowe er þat was never kyng;
 Allas, her was a delful⁴ þing —
 þat him⁵ scholde, for his pride,
 Such hap among his men bitide!
 Hunger and þurst he hadde grete,⁶
 For he ne moste⁷ no mete ete,
 Bote houndes eten of his disch.

5

10

15

20

25

The story continues thus: The new king gave Sicily an angelic government for more than three years — almost four, it would seem. At length — in April it was — he received a letter from Valmond, inviting him to Rome for Maundy Thursday. Thither the king went, and in his train the fool, the latter in a garment decorated with fox-tails, the angel in white samite set with pearls, and on a white steed. The deposed Robert appeals to his brothers in

¹ move
² sport
³ trice

⁴ doleful
⁵ MS. he
⁶ great

⁷ might, was allowed

vain, and thereupon thinks of Nebuchadnezzar and Holofernes, and how their pride was brought low. With this he pours out his heart in prayer: 'Lord, on thy fool have thou pity!' At the end of five weeks the king returns to Sicily.

þe angel com to Cisyle,
He and his men, in a while;
Whan he com into halle,
þe fol he bad forþ calle.
He seide: 'Fol, artow kyng?'
'Nay, sire,' quap he, 'wipoute lesyng.
'What artow?' seide þe angel.
'Sire, a fol, þat wot I wel,
And more þan fol, gif hit may be:
Kep² I non oper dignite.'
þe angel into chaumbre went;
After þe fol anon he sent;
He bad his men out of chaumbre goi
þer lefte³ no mo but he alon,
And þe fol þat stod him bi.
To him he seide: 'þou hast merci.
þenk þou were lowe pult,⁴
And al was for þin owne gult:
A fol þou were to hevene Kyng,
þerfore þou art an underlyng.
God haþ forgive þi mysdede;
Ever hereafter þou him drede!
I am an angel of renoun,
Sent to kepe þi regioun.
More joye me schal falle
In hevene among mi feren⁵ alle
In an oure of a day
þan in erþe, I þe say,
In an hundred þousend ȝer,
þeig al þe world fer and ner

¹ falsehood
² hold

³ remained
⁴ placed

Were min at mi likyng.
 I am an angel, þou art kyng.⁷
 He went in twynklyng of an eye.
 No more of him þer nas sege.¹

CHAUCER, CLERK'S TALE: THE STORY OF GRISELDA

See the general references on Chaucer at the close of the introductory note to *Sir Thopas*, p. 108.

Ther is at the west syde of Itaille,
 Doun at the rote of Vesulus² the colde,
 A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
 Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
 That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
 And many another delitable sighte;
 And Saluces³ this noble contree highte.

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
 As were his worthy eldres him bifore;
 And obeisant and redy to his honde
 Were alle his liges,⁴ bothe lasse and more.
 Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,⁵
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
 Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.⁶

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
 The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye,
 A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
 And ful of honour and of curteisye;
 Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye⁷ —
 Save in somme thinges that he was to blame —
 And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

Lines 22–105 are here omitted. Walter's subjects urge him to marry, and he promises, conditionally, to do so. The next selection includes lines 106–19.

¹ seen
² Monte Viso
³ Saluzzo, southwest of Turin

⁴ vassals
⁵ for a long time
⁶ common people, commons

⁷ guide, rule

'Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
That charge upon my bak I wol endure;
But I yow preye, and charge upon your lyf,
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
5 To worshiþe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,
As she an emperoures doghter were.

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye
Agayn¹ my choys shul neither grucche² ne stry
10 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;
And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
I prey yow, speketh namore of this matere.'

Lines 120-40 are here omitted. Walter names the wedding-day,
the wedding-feast. The next selection includes lines 141-343.

15 Noght fer fro thilke paleys honorable,
Ther as this markis shoop³ his mariage,
Ther stood a throp,⁴ of site delitable,⁵
In which that povre folk of that village
Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,⁶
20 And of hir labour took hir sustenance,
After that th'erthe yaf hem habundance.

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
Which that was holden povrest of hem alle
(But hye God som tyme senden can
25 His grace into a litel oxes stalle);
Janicula men of that throp him calle.
A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte,
And Grisildis this yonge mayden lighte.

¹ against
² murmur, grumble

³ prepared for, planned
⁴ thorp, small village

CHAUCER, THE CLERK'S TALE

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
 Than was she oon the faireste under sonne;
 For povrelliche yfostred up was she,
 No likerous¹ lust was thurgh hir herte yronne
 Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne²
 She drank, and, for she wolde vertu plesse,
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee
 Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage³;
 And in greet reverence and charitee
 Hir olde povre fader fostred she;
 A fewe sheep, spinning, on feeld she kepte,
 She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe
 Wortes⁴ or othere herbes, tymes ofte,
 The whiche she shredde and seeth⁵ for hir livinge,
 And made hir bed ful harde, and nothing softe;
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf onlofte⁶
 With everich obeisaunce and diligence
 That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this povre creature,
 Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yē,
 As he on hunting rood paraventure⁷;
 And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye,
 He noght with wantoun loking of folye
 His yēn caste on hir, but in sad wyse
 Upon hir chere⁸ he wolde him ofte avyse,⁹

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,
 And eek hir vertu, passing any wight
 Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.

¹ wanton
² tun, cask
³ serious disposition

⁴ herbs
⁵ boiled
⁶ aloft (kept aloft = sustained)

⁷ by chance
⁸ face, countenance
⁹ take thought

For though the peple have no greet insight
 In vertu, he considered ful right
 Hir bountee, and disposed¹ that he wolde
 Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde.

5 The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
 Telle what womman that it sholde be;
 For which merueille wondred many a man,
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee:
 'Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee?
 10 Wol he nat wedde? alas, alas the whyle!
 Why wol he thus himself and us bigyle?'

But natheles this markis hath don make²
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,
 15 And of hir clothing took he the mesure
 By a mayde, lyk to hir [as of³] stature,
 And eek of othere ornamentes alle
 That unto swich a wedding sholde falle.

The tyme of undern⁴ of the same day
 20 Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be;
 And al the paleys put was in array,
 Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree;
 Houses of office⁵ stuffed with plentee,
 Ther maystow seen, of deyntevous⁶ vitaille,⁷
 25 That may be founde as fer as last⁸ Itaille.

This royal markis, richely arrayed,
 Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
 The whiche unto the feste were yprayed,
 And of his retenue the bachelrye,⁹
 30 With many a soun of sondry melodye,

¹ planned
² had made
³ in respect to

⁴ about 9 A.M.
⁵ servants' offices
⁶ dainty

⁷ food
⁸ farthest (p
⁹ company r

Unto the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.

Grisilde of this, God woot, ful innocent
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may;
For wel she hadde herd seyde that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte: 'I wol with othere maydens stonde
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde¹
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me;
And than I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde.'

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;
And she set doun hir water-pot anoon
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
And doun upon hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille,
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoughtful markis spak unto this mayde
Ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere:
'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he sayde.
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde: 'Lord, he is al redy here.'
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette.

He by the hond than took this olde man,
 And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde :
 ' Janicula, I neither may ne can
 Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde ;
 5 If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,
 Thy doghter wol I take; er that I wende,¹
 As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
 And art my feithful lige man ybore ;
 10 And al that lyketh² me, I dar wel seyn
 It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
 Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore —
 If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe
 To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe ?'

15 This sodeyn cas³ this man astoned so
 That reed he wex, abayst,⁴ and al quaking
 He stood ; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
 But only thus : ' Lord,' quod he, ' my willing
 Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
 20 I wol nothing ; ye be my lord so dere ;
 Right as yow lust governeth⁵ this matere.'

' Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,
 ' That in thy chambre I and thou and she
 Have a collacion,⁶ and wostow why ?
 25 For I wol axe if it hir wille be
 To be my wyf, and reule hir after me ;
 And al this shal be doon in thy presence —
 I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'

30 And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
 Hir tretis,⁷ which as ye shal after here,
 The peple cam unto the hous withoute,

¹ go² pleaseth³ happening⁴ abashed, disconcerted⁵ arrange (imp. plur.)⁶ conference⁷ treat

And wondred hem in how honest¹ manere
 And tentifly² she kepte hir fader dere.
 But outerly³ Grisildis wondre mighte,
 For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned 5
 To seen so greet a gest come in that place;
 She never was to swiche gestes woned,⁴
 For which she loked with ful pale face.
 But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
 Thise am the wordes that the markis sayde 10
 To this benigne verray feithful mayde.

'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel understonde
 It lyketh to your fader and to me
 That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
 As I suppose ye wol that it so be. 15
 But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,
 'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
 Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse⁵?'

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
 To al my lust, and that I frely may, 20
 As me best thinketh, do yow⁶ laughe or smerte,
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
 And eek whan I sey "ye," ne⁷ sey nat "nay,"
 Neither by word ne frowning contenance;
 Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.' 25

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
 She seyde: 'Lord, undigne⁸ and unworthy
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,⁹
 But as ye wol yourself, right so wol I;
 And heer I swere that never willingly 30

¹ creditable, decent
² attentively, carefully
³ utterly

⁴ accustomed
⁵ consider the matter (= refuse)
⁶ cause you to

⁷ So MS. *read*; ye (?)
⁸ undeserving
⁹ offer

In werk ne thocht I nil yow disobeye,
For to be¹ deed, though me were looth to deye.'

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn!,' quod he.
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere
5 Out at the dore, and after that cam she.
And to the peple he seyde in this manere:
'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standieth here
Honoureth hir and loveth hir, I preye.
Whoso me loveth; ther is namore to seye.'

10 And for that nothing of hir olde gere²
She sholde bringe into his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there;
Of which thise ladyës were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wherin she was clad.
15 But natheles this mayde, bright of hewe,
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed.
Ful rudely, and with hir³ fingres smale
A corone on hir heed they han ydressed,⁴
20 And sette hir ful of nowches⁵ grete and smale
Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe⁶ the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

25 This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and than hir sette
Upon an hors, snow-whyte and wel ambling,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,⁷
With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende
30 In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

¹ even if I were to be

² apparel

³ their

⁴ placed, arranged

⁵ jewels

⁶ scarcely, with difficulty

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
 I seye that to this newe markisesse
 God hath swich favour sent hir, of his grace,
 That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse
 That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
 As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
 But norished in an emperoures halle.

5

Lines 344-441 are here omitted. A daughter is born to Griselda. Soon after, in order to try her patience, Walter tells her that his subjects grumble about her low birth, and announces that the child must be taken from her. The next selection embraces lines 442-518.

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved,¹
 Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce;
 For, as it semed, she was nat agreved.
 She seyde: 'Lord, al lyth in your plesaunce;
 My child and I with hertly obeisaunce²
 Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille³
 Your owene thing⁴; werketh after your wille.

10

Ther may nothing — God so my soule save! —
 Lyken to yow that may displese me;
 Ne I desyre nothing for to have,
 Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;
 This wil is in myn herte, and ay shal be.
 No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface,
 Ne chaunge my corage⁵ to another place.'

15

20

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
 But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
 Al drery was his chere and his loking,
 Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go.
 Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
 He prively hath told al his entente
 Unto a man, and to his wyf him sente.

25

¹ changed² hearty obedience³ destroy⁴ possession⁵ mind, disposition

A maner¹ sergeant² was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can³
Don execucioun on thinges hadde.

5 The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
Into the chambre he stalked him ful stille.

10 'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it me,
Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned;
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes hestes mowe nat been yfeyned⁴;
They mowe wel ben biwailed or compleyned,
But men mot nede unto her⁵ lust obeye,
And so wol I; ther is namore to seye.

15 This child I am comanded for to take';
And spak namore, but out the child he hente⁶
Despitously, and gan a chere⁷ make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;
20 And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

25 Suspecious was the diffame⁸ of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so,
She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
But natheless she neither weep ne syked,⁹
Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.

30 But atte laste speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentil man,

¹ sort of

² officer

³ know how to

⁴ evaded

⁵ their

⁶ seized

⁷ beha

⁸ ill re

⁹ sigh

CHAUCER, THE CLERK'S TALE

That she moste ¹ kisse hir child er that it deyde;
 And in her barm ² this litel child she leyde
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse,
 And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.³

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys:
 'Farweel, my child; I shal thee never see;
 But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,
 Of thilke Fader blessed mote thou be
 That for us deyde upon a croys of tree!
 Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,⁴
 For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.'

I trowe that to a norice ⁵ in this cas
 It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;
 Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed 'Allas!'
 But nathelees so sad stedfast was she,
 That she endured all adversitee,
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde:
 'Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.

15

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes heste,
 But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace,
 That, but ⁶ my lord forbad yow, atte leste
 Burieth this litel body in som place,
 That bestes ne no briddes it torace.⁷'
 But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
 But took the child, and wente upon his weye.

20

25

9-756 are here omitted. The child is taken in safety to Boulogne to Walter's sister, the countess. After four years a boy is born, and, to try Griselda's patience yet further, this child, too, is taken from her, and similarly disposed of. As a last test, Walter tells her that she herself must leave him, and return to her father's cottage, for his people demand that he take a high-born wife. The next selection embraces lines 757-805.

¹ might
² lap
³ bless

⁴ commit
⁵ nurse
⁶ unless

⁷ tear to pieces

And she answerde agayn in pacience :
' My lord,' quod she, ' I woot, and wiste alway,
How that bitwixen your magnificence
And my poverté no wight [ne] can ne may
5 Maken comparison ; it is no nay.
I heeld¹ me never digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.²

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made —
The heighe God take I for my witnesse,
10 And also wisly he my soule glade³ —
I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature.

15 That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Whereas I was noght worthy for to be,
That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preye
Foryelde⁴ it yow ; there is namore to seye.
20 Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwelle unto my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede,
A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.
25 For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
God shilde⁵ swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make.

And of your newe wyf, God of his grace
30 So graunte yow wele and prosperitee !
For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,

¹ MS. ne heeld
² chambermaid

³ comfort
⁴ to requite

In which that I was blisful wont to be;
 For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod she,
 'That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
 That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther as ye me profre swich dowaire
 As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
 It were my wrecched clothes, nothing faire,
 The which to me were hard now for to finde.
 O gode God! how gentil and how kinde
 Ye semed by your speche and your visage
 The day that maked was our mariage!

But sooth is seyde, algate¹ I finde it trewe —
 For in effect it preved is on me —
 Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
 But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
 To dyen in the cas,² it shal nat be
 That ever in word or werk I shal repente
 That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.'

Lines 306-994 are here omitted. Griselda returns to her father's home, with but a single garment, and Walter's prospective marriage is announced. Soon he summons Griselda to prepare his house for the bride's coming, and she meekly obeys. When the bride and her brother appear, Griselda praises the maiden's beauty, and begs Walter to deal with her gently and kindly. The next selection embraces lines 995-1071.

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he,
 'Be now namore agast ne yvel apayed³;
 I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
 As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
 In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.
 Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse' —
 And hir in armes took, and gan hir kesse.

¹ at any rate

² though death were the result

³ ill pleased

And she for wonder took of it no keep¹;
 She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde;
 She ferde² as she had stert out of a sleep,
 Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.³

5 'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by God that for us deyde,
 Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
 Ne never hadde, as God my soule save!

This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed
 To be my wyf; that other feithfully
 10 Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;
 Thou bare him in thy body trewely.
 At Boloigne have I kept hem⁴ prively;
 Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
 That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.

15 And folk that otherweyes⁵ han seyde of me,
 I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
 For no malice ne for no crueltee,
 But for t' assaye in thee thy wommanhede,
 And nat to sleen my children — God forbede! —
 20 But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
 Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth
 For pitous joye, and after hir swowninge
 She bothe hir yonge children unto hir calleth,
 25 And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
 Embraceth hem, and tendrely kysinge
 Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
 She batheth bothe hir⁶ visage and hir heres.

O, which a pitous thing it was to see
 30 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here!
 'Graunt mercy,' lord! that thanke I yow,' quod

¹ notice
² behaved
³ awoke

⁴ them
⁵ otherwise
⁶ their

⁷ best ti

That ye han saved me my children dere!
 Now rekke I never to ben deed right here;
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,
 No fors of¹ deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

O tendre, o dere. o yonge children myne,
 Your woful mooder wende² stedfastly
 That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
 Hadde eten yow; but God, of his mercy.
 And your benigne fader tendrely
 Hath doon yow kept³; and in that same stounde⁴
 Al sodeynly she swapte⁵ adoun to grounde.

And in her swough⁶ so sadly holdeth she
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem t'embrace,
 That with greet sleighte⁷ and greet difficultee
 The children from hir arm they gonne arace.⁸
 O many a teer on many a pitous face
 Doun ran, of hem that stoden hir bisyde;
 Unnethe⁹ abouten hir mighte they abyde.

Walter hir gladeth,¹⁰ and hir sorwe slaketh¹¹;
 She ryseth up, abaysed,¹² from hir traunce,
 And every wight hir joye and feste maketh,
 Til she hath caught agayn hir contenaunce.
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce
 That it was deyntee¹³ for to seen the chere
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met yfere.¹⁴

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,¹⁵
 Han taken hir, and into chambre goon,
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array;

¹ no matter for

² believed

³ caused you to be saved

⁴ moment

⁵ fell

⁶ swoon

⁷ dexterity

⁸ tear away

⁹ scarcely

¹⁰ cheers

¹¹ assuages

¹² amazed

¹³ delightful

¹⁴ together

¹⁵ saw

And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
 With a coroune of many a riche soon
 Upon hir heed, they into halle hir broghte,
 And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

5 Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
 For every man and womman dooth his might
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende,
 Til on the welkne¹ shoon the sterres light.
 For more solempne in every mannes sight
 10 This feste was, and gretter of costage,²
 Than was the revel of hir mariage.

THE FOX AND THE WOLF

The Fox and the Wolf is found in the same manuscript as *Dame Sirith*, and may therefore be assigned to the same date. It is a humorous beast-tale, a species of which this is the only English representative before the time of Chaucer. A version is to be found in Harris' *Uncle Remus Stories*, under the title, 'Old Mr. Rabbit, he's a Good Fisherman.' For the bibliography of the subject, see McKnight, *Middle English Humorous Tales in Verse* (D. C. Heath & Co., 1913).

Of the *Roman de Renard*, to which our poem is related, Jusserand says (i. 152): 'Superb manuscripts were illustrated for the libraries of the nobles; the incidents of this epic were represented in tapestry, sculptured on church stalls, painted on the margins of English missals. At the Renaissance, Caxton, with his Westminster presses, printed a Renard in prose.'

The dialect is Southern — *vox* for *fox*, etc.; and *v* is sometimes represented by *w*. The misplacement of *h*, now a mark of Cockney speech, is frequent.

A vox gon out of þe wode go,
 Afingret³ so þat him wes wo;
 He nes nevere in none wise
 15 Afingret erour⁴ half so swiþe.⁵
 He ne hoeld⁶ nouþer wey ne strete,

¹ welkin, heaven
² expense

³ ahungpered.
⁴ before

⁵ much
⁶ held, kept

For him wes lop men to mete;
 Him were levere meten one hen
 þen half an oundred¹ wimmen.
 He strok² swipe³ overal,⁴
 So þat⁵ he ofsei⁶ ane wal;
 Wipinne þe walle wes on⁷ hous.
 The vox wes pider⁸ swipe wous,⁹
 For he þouhte¹⁰ his hounger aquenche,¹¹
 Oper mid mete, oper mid drenche.¹²
 Abouten he biheld wel ʒerne¹³;
 Þo eroust¹⁴ bigon þe vox to erne¹⁵
 Al fort¹⁶ he come to one walle;
 And som þerof wes afalle,
 And wes þe wal overal tobroke,¹⁷
 And on ʒat¹⁸ þer wes iloke.¹⁹
 At þe furmeste²⁰ bruche²¹ þat he fond,
 He lep in, and over he wond.²²
 Þo he wes inne, smere²³ he lou,²⁴
 And þerof he hadde gome²⁵ inou;
 For he com in wipouten leve
 Boþen of haiward²⁶ and of reve.²⁷
 On hous þer wes — þe dore wes ope —
 Hennen weren þerinne icrope²⁸ —
 Five, þat makeþ anne flok —
 And mid hem sat on kok.
 Þe kok him wes flowen on hey,
 And two hennen him seten ney.
 'Wox,' quod þe kok, 'wat dest þou þare?'

¹ a hundred² went, passed (OE. *strīcan*)³ soon⁴ everywhere⁵ until⁶ observed⁷ a⁸ (to go) thither⁹ ready (OE. *fīrs*)¹⁰ thought; MS. þohute¹¹ to appease¹² MS. drunche¹³ eagerly¹⁴ then first¹⁵ run¹⁶ until¹⁷ broken to pieces¹⁸ gate¹⁹ locked²⁰ first²¹ breach, opening²² went, wriggled (OE. *windan*)²³ scornfully²⁴ laughed²⁵ sport²⁶ hedge-ward (one who protected the crops within enclosed fields)²⁷ reeve (farm-overseer)²⁸ crept (OE. *crēopan*)

Go hom, Crist þe geve kare !
 Houre¹ hennen þou dest ofte shome.²
 ' Be stille, Ich hote,³ a Godes nome !
 Quap þe wox : ' Sire Chauntecler,
 5 þou fle adoun, and com me ner.
 I nabbe⁴ don her nout bote goed,
 I have leten þine hennen blod ;
 Hy weren seke ounder þe ribe,
 þat hy ne migtte non lengour libe⁵
 10 Bote⁶ here heddre⁷ were itake⁸ ;
 þat I do for almes sake.
 Ich have hem letten eddre⁹ blod,
 And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed
 þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,⁹
 15 þou nestes¹⁰ nevere daies ten ;
 For þine lif-dayes beþ al ago,
 Bote þou bi mine rede¹¹ do ;
 I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,
 Oþer sone axe after þe prest.
 20 ' Go wei,' quod þe kok, ' wo þe bigo¹²
 þou havest don oure kunne¹³ wo.
 Go mid¹⁴ þan þat þou havest nouþe¹⁵ ;
 Acoursed be þou of Godes mouþe !
 For were I adoun, bi Godes nome,
 25 Ich migte ben siker of oþre shome.
 Ac weste¹⁶ hit houre cellarer¹⁷
 þat þou were icomen her,
 He wolde sone after þe zonge,
 Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge ;
 30 Alle þine bones he wolde tobreke ;
 þene we weren wel awreke.¹⁸

1 our
 2 shame, dishonor
 3 bid
 4 have not
 5 live
 6 unless

7 vein (OE. *ædre*)
 8 opened (?)
 9 spleen
 10 dost build a nest
 11 counsel
 12 take possession of

13 kind, race
 14 with
 15 now
 16 if (our cellarer) !
 17 cellarer
 18 avenged

He¹ wes stille, ne spak namore,
 Ac he werþ² apurst wel sore;
 þe purst him dede more wo
 þen hevede raþer³ his hounger do.
 Overal he cde⁴ and souhte;⁵
 On aventure his witt⁶ him brouhte⁷
 To one putte⁸ — wes water inne —
 þat wes imaked mid grete ginne.⁹
 Tuo boketes þer he founde:
 þat oþer¹⁰ wende to þe grounde,
 þat wen¹¹ me shulde þat on opwinde,
 þat oþer wolde adoun winde.
 He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne;
 He nom¹² þat boket, and lep þerinne,
 For he hopede inou to drinke. 15
 Þis boket beginneþ to sinke;
 To late þe vox wes biþout,¹⁸
 þo he wes in þe ginne ibrouit.
 Inou he gon him biþenche,
 Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche¹⁴; 20
 Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne;
 Ikaut he wes mid swikele¹⁵ ginne.
 Hit migte han iben wel his wille
 To lete þat boket hongi stille.
 Wat¹⁶ mid serewe¹⁷ and mid drede. 25
 Al his þurst him overhede.¹⁸
 Al þus he com to þe grounde,
 And water inou þer he founde.
 þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk;
 Him þoute þat water pere stonk, 30
 For hit wes togeines his wille.

15

20

25

30

the fox
 became
 earlier, before
 went (OE. *ēade*)
 MS. sohute
 MS. wiit

7 MS. brohute
 8 pit, well
 9 clever contrivance
 10 second
 11 when
 12 took

18 had bethought himself
 14 trick
 15 deceiving
 16 what
 17 sorrow
 18 passed away (OE. *oferēode*)

Go hom, Crist þe geve kare!
 Houre¹ hennen þou dest ofte sho
 ' Be stille, Ich hote,² a Godes n
 Quap þe wox: ' Sire Chauntecler,
 5 þou fle adoun, and com me ner.
 I nabbe⁴ don her nout bote goed,
 I have leten þine hennen blod;
 Hy weren seke ounder þe ribe,
 þat hy ne miȝtte non lengour libe
 10 Bote⁶ here heddre⁷ were itake⁸;
 þat I do for almes sake.
 Ich have hem letten eddre⁷ blod,
 And þe, Chauntecler, hit wolde don goed.
 þou havest þat ilke ounder þe splen,⁹
 15 þou nestes¹⁰ nevere daies ten;
 For þine lif-dayes beþ al ago,
 Bote þou bi mine rede¹¹ do;
 I do þe lete blod ounder þe brest,
 Oper sone axe after þe prest.
 20 ' Go wei,' quod þe kok, ' wo þe bigo¹²!
 þou havest don oure kunne¹³ wo.
 Go mid¹⁴ þan þat þou havest nouþe¹⁵;
 Acoursed be þou of Godes mouþe!
 For were I adoun, bi Godes nome,
 25 Ich miȝte ben siker of oþre shome.
 Ac weste¹⁶ hit houre cellarer¹⁷
 þat þou were icomen her,
 He wolde sone after þe zonge,
 Mid pikes, and stones, and staves stronge;
 30 Alle þine bones he wolde tobreke;
 þene we weren wel awreke.¹⁸'

1 our
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 16 if (our cellar
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He¹ wes stille, ne spak namore;
 Ac he werp² apurst wel sore;
 þe purst him dede more wo
 þen hevede rap³ his hounger do.
 Overal he ede⁴ and souhte;⁵
 On aventure his witt⁶ him brouhte⁷
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 þat wen¹¹ me shulde þat on opwinde,
 þat oþer wolde adoun winde.
 He ne hounderstod nout of þe ginne;
 He nom¹² þat boket, and lep perinne,
 For he hopede inou to drinke.
 þis boket beginnep to sinke;
 To late þe vox wes biþout,¹³
 þo he wes in þe ginne ibrou.
 Inou he gon him biþenche,
 Ac hit ne halp mid none wrenche¹⁴;
 Adoun he moste, he wes þerinne;
 Ikaut he wes mid swikele¹⁵ ginne.
 Hit migte han iben wel his wille
 To lete þat boket hongi stille.
 Wat¹⁶ mid serewe¹⁷ and mid drede,
 Al his purst him overhede.¹⁸
 Al þus he com to þe grounde,
 And water inou þer he founde.
 þo he fond water, ȝerne he dronk;
 Him þoute þat water þere stonk,
 For hit wes toȝeines his wille.

5

10

15

20

25

30

¹ the fox
² became
³ earlier, before
⁴ went (OE. *ȝode*)
⁵ MS. *sohute*
⁶ MS. *wiit*

⁷ MS. *brohute*
⁸ pit, well
⁹ clever contrivance
¹⁰ second
¹¹ when
¹² took

¹³ had bethought himself
¹⁴ trick
¹⁵ deceiving
¹⁶ what
¹⁷ sorrow
¹⁸ passed away (OE. *oferȝode*)

- 'Wo worþe,' quaf þe vox, 'lust a
 þat ne can ¹ meþ ² to his mete l
 5 Ȝef ich nevede to muchel i-ete,
 þis ilke shome nedd ³ I nouþe,
 Nedde lust iben of mine mouþe.
 Him is wo in euche londe,
 þat is þef mid his honde.
 Ich am ikaut mid swikele ginne,
 Oper soun devel me broute herinne
 10 I was woned ⁴ to ben wiis,
 Ac nou of me idon hit hiis. ⁵
 þe vox wep, and reuliche ⁶ bigan.
 þer com a wolf gon after þan
 Out of þe depe wode blive, ⁷
 15 For he wes a fingret swipe.
 Noping he ne founde in al þe nigte,
 Wermide ⁸ his hunger aquenche migtte.
 He com to þe putte, þene vox iherde;
 He him kneu wel bi his rerde, ⁹
 20 For hit wes his neigebore,
 And his gossip, of ¹⁰ children bore.
 Adoun bi þe putte he sat.
 Quod þe wolf: 'Wat may ben þat
 þat Ich in þe putte ihere?
 25 Hertou ¹¹ Cristine, oper mi fere ¹²?
 Say me soþ, ne gabbe ¹³ þou me nout,
 Wo ¹⁴ haveþ þe in þe putte ibrou?'
 þe vox hine ikneu wel for his kun,
 And þo eroust kom wiit to him;
 30 For he þoute mid soumme ginne
 Himself houpbringe, ¹⁵ þene wolf þerinne.

1 knows

2 moderation

3 should not have had

4 accustomed, wont

5 in (and) company with me

6 sadly

7 quickly

8 wherewith

9 speech

10 speech

1

1

1

1

14 who

Quod þe vox: 'Wo is nou þere?
 Ich wene hit is Sigrim þat Ich here.'
 'Þat is soþ,' þe wolf sede;
 'Ac wat art þou, so God þe rede?'
 'A!' quod þe vox, 'Ich wille þe telle;
 On alpi¹ word Ich lie nelle.²
 Ich am Reneuard, þi frend,
 And gif Ich þine come³ hevede iwend,⁴
 Ich hedde so ibede⁵ for þe,
 Þat þou sholdest comen to me.'
 'Mid þe?' quod þe wolf. 'War to?
 Wat shulde Ich ine þe putte do?'
 Quod þe vox: 'Þou art ounwiis,
 Her is þe blisse of paradiis;
 Her Ich mai evere wel fare,
 Wipouten pine,⁶ wipouten kare;
 Her is mete, her is drinke,
 Her is blisse wipouten swinke⁷;
 Her nis hounger never mo,
 Ne non oper kunnes⁸ wo;
 Of alle gode her is inou.'
 Mid pilke wordes þe wolf⁹ lou.
 'Art þou ded, so God þe rede,
 Oper of þe worlde?' þe wolf sede.
 Quod þe wolf: 'Wenne storve¹⁰ þou,
 And wat dest þou þere nou?
 Ne beþ nout zet þre daies ago,
 Þat þou and þi wif also,
 And þine children, smale and grete,
 Alle togedere mid me hete.¹¹'
 'Þat is soþ,' quod þe vox,
 'Gode þonk, nou hit is þus,
 Þat Ihc am to Criste vend¹²;

5

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¹ single (OE. *anſpīg*)² will not³ coming⁴ thought of⁵ prayed⁶ pain, trouble⁷ labor⁸ of no other kind⁹ MS. volf¹⁰ diedst¹¹ ate¹² = wend

Not¹ hit non of mine frend;
 I nolde, for al þe worldes goed,
 Ben ine þe worlde, þer Ich hem fond;
 Wat² shuld Ich ine þe worlde go,
 5 þer³ nis bote kare and wo,
 And livie in fulpe⁴ and in sunne?
 Ac her beþ joies fele cunne⁵;
 Her beþ boþe shep and get.⁶

10 þe wolf haveþ hounger swiþe gret,
 For he nedde gare⁷ i-ete;
 And þo he herde speken of mete,
 He wolde bleþeliche⁸ ben þare.
 'A!' quod þe wolf, 'gode ifere,⁹
 Moni goed mel þou havest me binome¹⁰
 15 Let me adoun to þe kome,
 And al Ich wole þe forgeve.'

'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'were þou isrive,¹
 And sunnen hevedest al forsake,
 And to klene lif itake,
 20 Ich wolde so bidde for þe
 þat þou sholdest comen to me.'

'To wom shuld Ich,' þe wolfe seide,
 Ben iknowe of¹² mine misdede?
 Her nis noþing alive
 25 þat me kouþe her nou srive.
 þou havest ben ofte min ifere,
 Woltou nou mi srist¹³ ihere,
 And al mi liif I shal þe telle?'

'Nay,' quod þe vox, 'I nelle.'
 30 'Neltou¹⁴?' quod þe wolf; 'þin ore:
 Ich am afingret swiþe sore;
 Ich wot to-nigt ich worþe ded

¹ knows not

² why (what)

³ where

⁴ filth, foulness

⁵ many kinds

⁶ goats

⁷ for a long time

⁸ gladly

⁹ friend, companion (OE. *gefēra*)

¹⁰ taken away from

¹¹ shriven

¹² confess

¹³ shrift, confes

¹⁴ wilt thou not

Bote þou do me somne reed.

For Cristes love, be mi prest.¹

þe wolf bey¹ adoun his brest,

And gon to siken² harde and stronge.

'Woltou,' quod þe vox, 'srift ounderfonge,³

5

Tel þine sunnen on and on,⁴

þat þer bileve⁵ never on.'

'Sone,' quod þe wolf, 'wel ifaie⁶;

Ich habbe ben qued⁷ al mi lifdaie;

Ich habbe widewene⁸ kors,⁹

10

þerfore ich fare þe wors.

A þousent shep ich habbe abiten,

And mo, ȝef hy weren iwriten,

Ac hit me ofþinkeþ¹⁰ sore.

Maister, shal I tellen more?' 15

'Ȝe,' quod þe vox, 'al þou most sugge,¹¹

Oþer elleswer þou most abugge.¹²'

'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'forȝef hit me,

Ich habbe ofte sehid qued bi¹³ þe.

Men seide þat þou on þine live

20

Misferdest¹⁴ mid mine wive;

Ich þe aperseivede one stounde,

And in bedde togedere ou¹⁵ founde;

Ich wes ofte ou ful ney,

And in bedde togedere ou sey.¹⁶

25

Ich wende, also oþre doþ,

þat¹⁷ Ich iseie were soþ,

And þerfore þou were me loþ;

Gode gossip, ne be þou nouht¹⁸ wroþ.'

'Wolf,' quod þe vox him þo,

30

'Al þat þou havest her bifore ido,

¹ bowed
² groan
³ receive
⁴ one by one
⁵ remain
⁶ gladly, fain; MS. I fare

⁷ evil
⁸ of widows
⁹ curse
¹⁰ repents (it repents me = I repent)
¹¹ say
¹² make atonement

¹³ said evil of
¹⁴ went astray, sinned
¹⁵ you
¹⁶ saw; MS. ley
¹⁷ what
¹⁸ MS. nohut

In þouht,¹ in speche, and in dede,
 In euche operes kunnes² quede,
 Ich þe forgeve at þisse nede.'

'Crist þe forgelde!' þe wolf seide.

5 'Nou Ich am in clene live,
 Ne recche Ich of childe ne of wive.
 Ac sei me wat I shal do,
 And ou³ Ich may comen þe to.'

'Do?' quod þe vox. 'Ich wille þe lere.⁴

10 Isiist þou a boket hongri þere?
 Þere is a bruche of hevene blisse.⁵
 Lep þerinne, mid iwisse,
 And þou shalt comen to me sone.'

Quod the wolf, 'þat is ligt to done.'

15 He lep in, and way⁶ sumdel⁷ —

þat weste⁸ þe vox ful wel.

þe wolf gon sinke, þe vox arise;

þo gon þe wolf sore agrise.⁹

þo he com amidde þe putte,

20 þe wolfe þene vox opward¹⁰ mette.

'Gossip,' quod þe wolf, 'wat nou?

Wat havest þou imunt¹¹? weder wolt þou?'

'Weder Ich wille?' þe vox sede.

'Ich wille oup, so God me rede!

25 And nou go down wip þi meel,¹²

þi bigete¹³ worþ wel smal;

Ac Ich am þerof glad and bliþe,

þat þou art nomen¹⁴ in clene live.

þi soule-cnul¹⁵ Ich wille do ringe,

30 And masse for þine soule singe.'

þe wrecche bineþe noþing ne vind

Bote cold water, and honger him bind;

¹ MS. þohut

² of every other kind

³ how

⁴ teach

⁵ opening into (chance at) heaven's joy

⁶ weighed

⁷ somewhat

⁸ knew

⁹ to be alarmed

¹⁰ on his way up

¹¹ meant, intended

¹² toward thy meal

¹³ getting, spoil

¹⁴ taken

¹⁵ soul-knell

To colde gistninge¹ he wes ibede²;
 Vroggen³ haveþ his dou iknede.⁴
 þe wolf in þe putte stod,
 Afingret so þat he ves wod.⁵
 Inou he cursede þat pider him broute;
 þe vox þerof luitel route.⁶
 þe put him wes þe house ney,
 þer freren woneden swiþe sley.⁷
 þo þat hit com to þe time
 þat hoe shulden arisen ine,
 For to suggen here houssong,⁸
 O frere þere wes among,
 Of here slep hem shulde awecche,
 Wen hoe⁹ shulden pidere recche.¹⁰
 He seide: 'Ariseþ on and on,
 And komeþ to houssong hevereuch on.'
 þis ilke frere heyte¹¹ Ailmer;
 He wes hoere maister curtiler.¹²
 He wes hofþurst swiþe stronge;
 Rigþ amidward here houssonge,
 Alhone¹³ to þe putte he hede,¹⁴
 For he wende bete¹⁵ his nede.
 He com to þe putte, and drou,
 And þe wolf wes hevi inou.
 þe frere mid al his maine¹⁶ tey¹⁷
 So longe þat¹⁸ he þene wolf isey!
 For he sei þene wolf þer sitte,
 He gradde¹⁹: 'þe devel is in þe putte!'
 To þe putte hy gounnen gon,
 Alle mid pikes, and staves, and ston,
 Euch mon mid þat he hedde;

15

20

25

30

1 feast
 2 invited
 3 frogs; MS. wroggen
 4 dough kneaded
 5 mad, crazed
 6 recked
 7 shrewd

8 matins (OE. *ächtson*)
 9 they
 10 go
 11 was named
 12 gardener
 13 alone
 14 went

15 remedy, satisfy
 16 strength (OE. *mægen*; cf. modern 'might and main')
 17 pulled, tugged
 18 until
 19 cried out

No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
 Hir dyete was accordant ¹ to hir cote ² —
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
 Attempree ³ dyete was al hir phisyk,
 And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce. ⁴
 The goute lette ⁵ hir nothing ⁶ for to daunce,
 N' apoplexye shente ⁷ nat hir heed;
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
 Hir bord ⁸ was served most with whyt and blak,
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
 Seynd ⁹ bacoun, and somtyme an ey ¹⁰ or tweye,
 For she was as it were a maner ¹¹ deye. ¹²

A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,
 In which she hadde a cok, hight ¹³ Chauntecleer.
 In al the land of crowing nas ¹⁴ his peer;
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
 Wel sikerer ¹⁵ was his crowing in his logge ¹⁶
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey -orlogge. ¹⁷
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun
 Of equinoxial ¹⁸ in thilke toun;
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended, ¹⁹
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailed, ²⁰ as it were a castel-wal;
 His bile ²¹ was blak, and as the jeet ²² it shoon;
 Lyk asur were his legges and his toon ²³;

¹ in consonance with² gown³ moderate, temperate⁴ a contented heart (heart's satisfaction)⁵ prevented⁶ not at all⁷ injured⁸ table⁹ singed, broiled¹⁰ egg¹¹ kind of¹² dairywoman¹³ called¹⁴ there was not¹⁵ more trustworthy¹⁶ lodge¹⁷ clock¹⁸ the equinoctial circle¹⁹ when one hour was past²⁰ indented like a battlement²¹ bill²² jet²³ toes

His nayles whytter than the lilic-flour,
 And lyk the burned¹ gold was his colour.
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
 5 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
 And wonder lyk to him, as of² colours;
 Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
 Was cleped faire Damoysele Pertelote.
 Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,³
 10 And compaignable,⁴ and bar himself so faire,
 Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
 That trewely she hath the herte in hold⁵
 Of Chauntecleer, loken in every lith⁶;
 He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
 15 But such a joye was it to here hem singe,
 Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
 In swete accord, 'My lief is faren in londe.'
 For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
 Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
 20 And so bifel that, in a daweninge,⁷
 As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
 Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
 And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
 This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
 25 As man that in his dreem is drecched⁸ sore.
 And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
 She was agast, and seyde: 'O herte dere,
 What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
 Ye been a verray sleper, fy! for shame!'
 30 And he answerde and seyde thus: 'Madame,
 I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief⁹;

¹ burnished

² as regards

³ well-mannered

⁴ companionable

⁵ in her possession

⁶ locked in every limb

⁷ d

⁸ t

⁹ a

By God, me mette¹ I was in swich meschief
 Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
 Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene² recche³ aright,
 And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
 Me mette how that I romed up and down
 Withinne our yerde, wheras⁴ I saugh a beste,
 Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste⁵
 Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
 His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
 And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
 With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
 His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
 Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
 This caused me my groning, doutelees.'

'Avoy⁶!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!
 Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that God above,
 Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
 I can nat love a coward, by my feith!
 For certes, what so any womman seith,
 We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
 To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,⁷
 And secree,⁸ and no nigard, ne no fool,
 Ne him that is agast of every tool,⁹
 Ne noon avauntour,¹⁰ by that God above!
 How dorste ye seyn for shame — unto your love —
 That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
 Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
 Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
 Nothing, God wot, but vanitee in sweven is:
 Swevenes engendren of¹¹ replecciouns,¹²
 And ofte of fume,¹³ and of complecciouns,¹⁴

¹ I dreamed² dream³ bring to a good issue (*lit.*
interpret)⁴ where⁵ arrest⁶ fie (OF. *avoi*)⁷ generous⁸ trustworthy⁹ instrument, weapon¹⁰ boaster¹¹ are produced by¹² surfeits¹³ noxious vapor rising from
stomach to brain¹⁴ the combination of the
four humors of the body
in certain proportions

Whan humours been to habundan: in a wight.
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre rede *colera*,² pardee,
 5 Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
 Of arwes,³ and of fyr with rede lemes,⁴
 Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
 Of kontek,⁵ and of whelpes⁶ grete and lyte⁷;
 Right as the humour of malencolye
 10 Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
 For fere of blake beres, or boles⁸ blake,
 Or elles blake develes wole hem take.
 Of othere humours coude I telle also,
 That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
 15 But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
 Lo Catoun,⁹ which that was so wys a man,
 Seyde he nat thus, Ne do no fors of¹⁰ dremes?
 Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the blem
 For Goddes love, as tak¹¹ som laxatyf;
 20 Up¹² peril of my soule and of my lyf,
 I counseille yow the beste — I wol nat lye —
 That bothe of colere and of malencolye
 Ye purge yow; and, for¹³ ye shul nat tarie,
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
 25 I shal myself to herbes techen¹⁴ yow,
 That shul ben for your hele¹⁵ and for your prow
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,¹⁷
 To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
 30 Forget not this, for Goddes owene love!
 Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun;

¹ dreamed

² one of the four so-called humors

³ arrows

⁴ flames

⁵ strife, contest

⁶ dogs

⁷ small

⁸ bulls

⁹ *Dionysii Catonis Disticha
de Moribus ad Filium*

¹⁰ pay no heed to

¹¹ pray take

12

13

14

15

16

17

Ware¹ the sonne in his ascencioun
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,²
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane³
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane. 5
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves
 Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
 Of lauriol,⁴ centaure,⁵ and fumetere,⁶
 Or elles of ellebor⁷ that groweth there,
 Of catapuce⁸ or of gaytres beryis,⁹ 10
 Of erbe yve,¹⁰ growing in our yerd, ther mery is;
 Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader¹¹ kin!
 Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow namore.'
 'Madame,' quod he, 'graunt mercy¹² of your lore! 15
 But nathelees, as touching daun¹³ Catoun,
 That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
 Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
 By God, men may in olde bokes rede
 Of many a man, more of auctoritee 20
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,¹⁴
 That al the revers¹⁵ seyn of his sentence,¹⁶
 And han wel founden by experience
 That dremes ben significaciouns
 As wel of joye as tribulaciouns 25
 That folk enduren in this lyf present.
 Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
 The verray preve¹⁷ sheweth it in dede.
 Oon of the gretteste auctours¹⁸ that men rede
 Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente 30
 On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;

¹ beware lest² groat³ tertian⁴ spurge-laurel⁵ centaury⁶ fumitory⁷ hellebore⁸ lesser spurge (caper spurge)⁹ dogwood berries (some-

times those of other

similar shrubs)

¹⁰ herb ivy (ground pine?)¹¹ father's¹² great thanks (gramercy)¹³ lord, sir (Lat. *dominus*)¹⁴ so may I prosper¹⁵ opposite¹⁶ opinion¹⁷ proof¹⁸ Cicero, in his *De Divina-*
tione

5 In which they bothe mighte ylogged¹ be.
 Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
 As for that night, departen⁷ compaignye;
 And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
 And took his logging as it wolde falle.⁸
 10 That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
 Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
 That other man was logged wel ynough,
 As was his aventure,⁹ or his fortune,
 That us governeth alle as in commune.¹⁰
 15 And so bifel that, longe er it were day,
 This man mette in his bed, ther as¹¹ he lay
 How that his felawe gan upon him calle,
 And seyde: "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
 This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
 20 Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
 In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
 This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde¹²;
 But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
 He turned him, and took of this no keep¹³;
 25 Him thoughte¹⁴ his dreem nas but a vanitee.¹⁵
 Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he;
 And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
 Cam, as him thoughte, and seide: "I am now slayn
 Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
 30 Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,¹⁷
 And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,

¹ concourse, gathering

² supply which was

³ scanty

⁴ lodgings

⁵ one

⁶ lodged

⁷ part

⁸ happen

⁹ chance

¹⁰ general

¹¹ where

¹² started up

¹³ notice, heed

¹⁴ it seemed

¹⁵ delusion

¹⁶ slain

¹⁷ morning

"A carte ful of dong¹ ther shaltow see,
 In which my body is hid ful prively;
 Do² thilke carte aresten³ boldely.
 My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"
 And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn, 5
 With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
 And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
 For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
 To his felawes in⁴ he took the way;
 And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle, 10
 After his felawe he bigan to calle.
 The hostiler⁵ answerde him anon,
 And seyde: "Sire, your felawe is agon;
 As sone as day he wente out of the toun."
 This man gan fallen in suspeciou, 15
 Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,⁶
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge⁷ lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse 20
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse⁸;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce and justice of⁹ this felonye:
 "My felawe mordred is this same night,
 And in this carte he lyth¹⁰ gapinge upright.¹¹ 25
 I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
 "That sholden kepe¹² and reulen¹³ this citee;
 Harrow¹⁴! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!"
 What sholde I more unto this tale sayn?
 The peple outsterte,¹⁵ and caste the cart to grounde, 30
 And in the middel of the dong they founde

1 dung
 2 cause
 3 to be stopped
 4 inn
 5 innkeeper

6 delay
 7 cover with manure
 8 relate
 9 for
 10 lieth

11 on his back
 12 watch over
 13 rule
 14 a cry of distress
 15 started out

The dede man, that mordred was al newe.¹
 O blisful God, that art so just and trewe!
 Lo, how that thou biwreyst² mordre alway!
 Mordre wol out — that see we day by day.
 5 Mordre is so wlatom³ and abhominable
 To God, that is so just and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled⁴ be;
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out — this's my conclusioun.
 10 And right anoon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent⁵ the carter, and so sore him pyned,⁶
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,⁷
 That thay biknewe⁸ hir wikkednesse anoon,
 And were anhangd by the nekke-boon.
 15 Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
 And certes, in the same book I rede,
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this
 — I gabbe⁹ nat, so have I joye or blis —
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,
 20 For certeyn cause, into a fer contree,
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
 But on a day, agayn¹⁰ the eventyde,
 25 The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.¹¹
 Jolif¹² and glad they wente unto hir reste,
 And casten¹³ hem ful erly for to saille;
 But to that oo¹⁴ man fil¹⁵ a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 30 Him mette a wonder drem, agayn¹⁰ the day:
 Him thoughte¹⁶ a man stood by his beddes syde,

¹ recently² dost make manifest, bring to
light³ heinous⁴ concealed⁵ seized⁶ tortured⁷ racked⁸ confessed⁹ lie¹⁰ towards¹¹ was agreeable to them¹² in good spirits¹³ proposed¹⁴ one¹⁵ befell¹⁶ it seemed to him

And him comaunded that he sholde abyde,
 And seyde him thus: "If thou to-morwe wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt¹; my tale is at an ende."
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preyde him his viage² for to lette³; 5
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
 "No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte agaste,
 That I wol lette for to do my thinges.⁴ 10
 I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
 For swevenes been but vanitees and japes⁵:
 Men dreme alday⁶ of owles or of apes,
 And eke of many a mase⁷ therwithal;
 Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.⁸ 15
 But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
 And thus forsleuthen⁹ wilfully thy tyde,¹⁰
 God wot it reweth me¹¹; and have good day."
 And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
 But er that he hadde halfe his cours yseyled, 20
 Noot I¹² nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,¹³
 But casuely¹⁴ the shippes botme¹⁵ rente,¹⁶
 And ship and man under the water wente,
 In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
 That with hem seyled at the same tyde. 25
 And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
 By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,¹⁷
 That no man sholde been to recchelees¹⁸
 Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
 That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede. 30
 Lo, in the lyf of Seint Kenelm I rede —

¹ drowned² journey³ abandon, give up⁴ business affairs⁵ jests, tricks⁶ continually⁷ bewildering situation⁸ shall be⁹ waste in sloth¹⁰ time¹¹ I am sorry¹² I know not¹³ (there) ailed¹⁴ by accident¹⁵ bottom¹⁶ split¹⁷ mayst thou learn¹⁸ heedless

TALES

That was Kenulphus¹ sone, the noble king
 Of Mercenrike² — how Kenelm mette a thing;
 A lyte³ er he was mordred, on a day,
 His mordre in his avisioun⁴ he say.⁵
 His norice⁶ him expouned⁷ every del⁸
 His sweven, and bad him for to kepe⁹ him wel
 For¹⁰ traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old
 And therfore litel tale hath he told¹¹
 Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
 By God, I hadde lever than my sherte
 That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
 Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
 Macrobeus, that writ th' avisioun
 In Affrike of the worthy Cipion,
 Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
 Warning of thinges that men after¹² seen.
 And forthermore, I pray yow loketh wel
 In the Olde Testament, of¹³ Daniel,
 If he held dremes any vanitee.
 Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
 Wher¹⁴ dremes ben somtyme — I sey nat alle —
 Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
 Loke of Egipt the king, Daun Pharao,
 His bakere and his boteler also,
 Wher¹⁴ they ne felte noon effect¹⁵ in dremes.
 Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes,¹⁶
 May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
 Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde¹⁷ king,
 Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,

¹ Kenulf (died 819)

² Mercia

³ little

⁴ vision

⁵ saw

⁶ nurse

⁷ explained

⁸ bit

⁹ guard

¹⁰ against

¹¹ account hath he made

¹² afterwards

¹³ as to

¹⁴ wheth

¹⁵ reality

¹⁶ realms

¹⁷ Lydia

¹³. avisioun: the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, with a comment
 acrobis.
²⁹. For this dream, cf. the *Monk's Tale*.

Which signified he sholde anhangd be?
 Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores¹ wyf,
 That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
 She dremed on the same night biforn
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,²
 If thilke day he wente into bataille.
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
 And eek it is ny³ day, I may nat dwelle.⁴
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee; and I seye, forthermore,
 That I ne telle⁵ of laxatyves no store,
 For they ben venimous,⁶ I woot it wel;
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.⁷
 Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte⁸ al this;
 Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing God hath sent me large grace;
 For whan I see the beautee of your face,
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,⁹
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
 For, also siker¹⁰ as *In principio*,¹¹
Mulier est hominis confusio;
 Madame, the sentence¹² of this Latin is:
 "Womman is mannes joye and al his blis."
 For whan I fele anight¹³ your softe syde, . . .¹⁴
 I am so ful of joye and of solas
 That I defye bothe sweven and drem.⁷
 And with that word he fley down fro the beem,

¹ Hector's² lost³ nearly⁴ continue⁵ set⁶ poisonous⁷ never a whit⁸ cease⁹ eyes¹⁰ sure¹¹ John 1. 1¹² meaning¹³ by night¹⁴ Two lines omitted

For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
 And with a chuk¹ he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn, lay² in the yerd;
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd. . . .³
 5 He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
 And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
 Him deynd⁴ not to sette his foot to ground
 He chukketh whan he hath a corn yfounde,
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 10 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
 And after wol I telle his aventure.

Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
 That highte March, whan God first maked man,
 15 Was complet, and [y]passed were also,
 Sin March was goon,⁵ [wel] thritty dayes and two,
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
 20 That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne⁶
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more;
 And knew by kynde,⁷ and by noon other lore,⁸
 That it was pryde,⁹ and crew with blisful stevene.¹⁰
 'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene'
 25 Fourty degrees and oon, and more, ywis.
 Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
 Herkneþ thise¹¹ blisful briddes how they singe,
 And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
 Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'
 30 But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas,¹²

¹ cluck² that lay³ Two lines omitted⁴ he deigned⁵ MS. bigan (*for* was goon)⁶ run, progressed⁷ nature⁸ teaching⁹ abo¹⁰ voice, sound¹¹ these¹² misfortune

For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.
 God woot that worldly joye is sone ago¹;
 And if a rethor² coude faire endyte,³
 He in a cronique⁴ sauflly⁵ mighte it wryte,
 As for a sovereyn notabilitee.⁶
 Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
 This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
 As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
 That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
 Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.⁷

5

10

A colfox,⁸ ful of sly iniquitee,
 That in the grove hadde woned⁹ yeres three,
 By¹⁰ heigh imaginacioun forncast,¹¹
 The same night thurghout the hegges¹² brast¹³
 Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
 Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
 And in a bed of wortes¹⁴ stille he lay,
 Til it was passed undern¹⁵ of the day,
 Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
 As gladly¹⁶ doon thise¹⁷ homicydes alle,
 That in awayt¹⁸ ligger¹⁹ to mordre men.
 O false mordrer, lurking in thy den!
 O newe Scariot,²⁰ newe Genilon²¹!
 False dissimilour,²² O Greek Sinon,
 That broghtest Troye al outrely²³ to sorwe!
 O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
 That thou into that yerd flough²⁴ fro the bemes!
 Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes
 That thilke day was perilous to thee,

15

20

25

¹ past
² skilled writer
³ compose
⁴ chronicle
⁵ safely
⁶ supremely notable fact
⁷ subject
⁸ brant fox (having a large inter-
 mixture of black in its fur)

⁹ dwelt
¹⁰ as a result of
¹¹ premeditated
¹² hedges
¹³ burst
¹⁴ herbs
¹⁵ about 11 A.M.
¹⁶ generally
¹⁷ these

¹⁸ waiting
¹⁹ lie
²⁰ Iscariot
²¹ Gancion, who betrayed
 Roland
²² dissembler
²³ utterly
²⁴ flew

And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
 Thise¹ been² the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
 I can³ noon harm of no womman divyne.

Faire in the sond,⁴ to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth⁵ Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
 Agayn⁶ the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see —
 For *Physiologus* seith sikerly
 How that they singen wel and merily.
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yē,
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
 He was war⁷ of this fox that lay ful lowe.
 Nothing ne liste him⁸ thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, 'Cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte;
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie,⁹ if he may it see,
 Though he never erst¹⁰ had seyn it with his yē.

This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde: 'Gentil sire, alas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,¹¹
 If I to yow wolde¹² harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for t' espye;
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe,
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene¹³
 As eny aungel hath that is in hevene;
 Therwith ye han in musik more felling
 Than hadde Boëce,¹⁴ or any that can singe.

¹ these² are³ know⁴ sand⁵ lieth⁶ exposed to⁷ aware⁸ it pleased him not at all⁹ opposite, foe¹⁰ before¹¹ fiend, devil¹² wished¹³ voice¹⁴ Boethius wrote a treatise,*De Musica*

My lord your fader — God his soule blesse! —
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
 Han in myn hous ybeen, to my gret ese¹;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 5 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye —
 So mote I brouke² wel myn eyen tweye! —
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
 As dide your fader in the morweninge;
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
 10 And, for to make his voys the more strong,
 He wolde so payne him³ that with bothe his yē
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
 And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
 15 And eek he was of swich discrecioun
 That ther nas no man in no regioun
 That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
 I have wel rad in *Daun Burnel the Asse*,
 Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
 20 For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
 Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,⁴
 He made him for to lese his benefyce.
 But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
 Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
 25 Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
 Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee;
 Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete⁵?
 This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
 As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
 30 So was he ravished with his flaterye.
 Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour⁶
 Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,⁷

¹ delight
² enjoy

³ take such pains
⁴ foolish

⁵ imitate
⁶ flatterer

18. Nigellus Wireker wrote the *Burnellus*, or *Speculum Stue*
 twelfth century.

That plesen yow wel more. by my feith,
 Than he that soothfastnesse¹ unto yow seith.
 Redeth Ecclesiaste² of³ flaterye;
 Beth war,⁴ ye lordes, of hir⁵ trecherye.
 This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
 Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,⁶
 And gan to crowe loude for the nones⁷;
 And Daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
 And by the gargat⁸ hente⁹ Chauntecleer,
 And on his bak toward the wode him beer,¹⁰
 For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.¹¹

O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed¹²!
 Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
 Allas, his wyf ne roghte¹³ nat of dremes!
 And on a Friday fil¹⁴ al this meschaunce.
 O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
 Sin¹⁵ that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
 And in thy service dide al his poweer,
 More for delyt, than world to multiplie,
 Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
 O Gaufred,¹⁶ dere mayster soverayn,
 That, whan thy worthy King Richard was slayn
 With shot, compleynedest¹⁷ his deth so sore,
 Why ne hadde I now thy sentence¹⁸ and thy lore,
 The Friday for to chyde,¹⁹ as diden ye
 (For on a Friday soothly slayn was he)?
 Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne²⁰
 For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
 Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
 Was never of ladies maad whan Ilioun

¹ truth
² Ecclesiasticus 12. 10, 11, 16
³ on
⁴ beware
⁵ their
⁶ closed
⁷ for the occasion

⁸ throat
⁹ seized
¹⁰ bore
¹¹ pursued
¹² escaped
¹³ recked
¹⁴ happened

¹⁵ since
¹⁶ Geoffrey de Vinsauf
¹⁷ didst lament
¹⁸ judgment
¹⁹ blame
²⁰ lament

Was wonne, and Pirrus¹ with his streite² swerd,
 Whan he hadde hent King Priam by the berd,
 And slayn him — as saith us *Encydes* —
 As maden alle the hennes in the clos,³
 5 Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
 But sovereynly⁴ Dame Pertelote shrighte,⁵
 Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales⁶ wyf
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
 And that the Romayns hadde brend⁷ Cartage;
 10 She was so ful of torment and of rage
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hirselves with a stedfast herte.
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee
 15 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
 For that hir⁸ housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.

This sely⁹ widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
 20 Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo;
 And out at dores sterten they anoon,
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;
 And cryden, 'Out¹⁰! harrow¹¹! and weylaway!
 25 Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
 And eek with staves many another man;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges —
 30 So were they fered¹² for berking of the dogges.
 And shouting of the men and wimmen eke;
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.

1 Pyrrhus
 2 drawn
 3 enclosure
 4 most of all
 5 shrieked

6 General of Carthage, when it was
 burned
 7 burned
 8 their
 9 good

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle¹;
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
 So hidous was the noyse, a! benedicite²! 5
 Certes he, Jakke Straw,³ and his meynec,⁴
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming⁵ kille,
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemes,⁶ and of box,⁷ 10
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,⁸
 And therwithal thay shryked and they houped,⁹
 It semed as that heaven sholde falle.

Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
 Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly 15
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
 In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,
 And seyde: 'Sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn — as wis God helpe me! — 20
 "Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
 A verray pestilence upon yow falle!
 Now am I come unto this wodes syde,
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon." ' 25
 The fox answerde: 'In feith, it shal be don;'
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,¹⁰
 And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon.
 And whan the fox saugh that he was ygon, 30
 'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
 I have to yow,' quod he, 'ydoon trespas,
 Inasmuche as I maked yow aferd,

¹ kill² bless us; *from*, benedicite³ (in the rebellion of 1381)⁴ followers⁵ any Flemish merchant in
London⁶ trumpets⁷ boxwood⁸ tooted⁹ whooped¹⁰ nimbly, skilfully

Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
 Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente;
 I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so.'

5 'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe¹ us bothe two,
 And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.

Thou shalt namore, thurgh thy flaterye,
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yē.
 10 For he that winketh whan he sholde see,
 Al wilfully, God lat him never thee²!

'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yeve him meschaunce
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
 That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees!'

15 Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees³
 And necligent, and truste on flaterye!
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Taketh the moralitee, good men;
 20 For Seint Paul seith⁴ that al that writen is,
 To our doctryne it is ywrite, ywis.
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.

Now, gode God, if that it be thy wille,
 As seith my lord,⁵ so make us alle good men,
 25 And bringe us to his heighe blisse! Amen.

¹ curse
² prosper

³ heedless
⁴ 2 Tim. 3. 16

⁵ the Archbishop of Canterbury, as
 a manuscript note explains

CHRONICLES

LAYAMON, BRUT

Our chief information concerning Layamon is derived from the first extract printed below. In the later manuscript, 'Laḡamon' is 'Lawman'; and indeed the word means 'lawman,' a kind of magistrate. 'Ernleḡe' is Ar(e)ley Regis, or King's Ar(e)ley, just south of Stourport, where the Stour joins the Severn, and about ten miles north (slightly northwest) of Worcester. 'Radestone' is Redstone, a high cliff in the neighborhood.

Layamon goes on to say that it came into his mind to relate the history of England from the beginning, and that, in order to this, he journeyed up and down the country to procure the books he needed. Though he carries his story only down to 689, it consists of some 16,120 long lines, written about 1205. His chief source was Wace's *Roman de Brut* (1205), yet the earlier manuscript of Layamon contains, according to B. S. Monroe (*Modern Philology* 4. 567), only 87 French words. In common with Wace, or rather through Wace, he is ultimately dependent on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Histories of the Kings of Britain* (before 1148), the ultimate source of so much romance dealing with 'the matter of Britain.' Geoffrey's book has been excellently translated by Sebastian Evans (Temple Classics).

Of the two manuscripts, the second may be a half century or so later than the first. Our extracts are taken from the first, as given in the standard edition, Madden's (3 vols., London, 1847), with the latter's short lines printed as long ones (but Madden's numbering is retained). For further information, see the preface to Madden's edition; the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 260-4; Monroe, *Jour. Eng. and Germ. Phil.* 7. 139-41 (bibliography).

LAYAMON'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

Lines 1-10 (Madden 1. 1)

An preost¹ wes on leoden,² Laḡamon wes ihoten³;
He wes Leovenaðes sone — liðe⁴ him beo Drihten⁵!
He wonede⁶ at Ernleḡe, at æðelen⁷ are⁸ chirechen,⁹
Uppen Sevarne stape¹⁰ — sel¹¹ par him puhte¹² —
On fest¹³ Radestone; per he bock radde.¹⁴

5

- 1 priest
- 2 among the people
- 3 named
- 4 merciful

- 5 the Lord
- 6 lived
- 7 noble
- 8 a

- 9 church
- 10 bank
- 11 good, pleasant
- 12 seemed

- 13 hard by
- 14 read

THE PROPHECY OF DIANA

Lines 1097-1252 (Madden I. 47-53). Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Book I, chap. 11, and Milton's translation of it in his *History of Britain*.

- Brutus nom ¹ Ignogen, and into scipe lædde.
 Heo ² rihten ³ heora rapes, heo rærden ⁴ heora mastes,
 Heo wunden up seiles; wind stod ⁵ an willen.⁶
 Sixtene siðe ⁷ tuenti scipen tuhten ⁸ from havene,
 5 And feower scipen greate þe weren grundladene ⁹
 Mid þat beste wepnen þa Brutus havede.
 Heo fusden ¹⁰ from stronde ut of Griclonde ¹¹;
 Heo wenden ut i wide sæ; þa wilde ¹² wurðen itemede.¹³
 Tweige dawes and tua niht inne sæ weren;
 10 þen oðer ¹⁴ dai heo comen liðen ¹⁵ on æven to londe.
 Logice ¹⁶ hatte ¹⁷ þat eitlond ¹⁸; leode ¹⁹ nere þar nane —
 Ne wapmen ²⁰ ne wifmen — buten ²¹ westige ²² pæðes.²³
 Utlagen ²⁴ hefden iræved ²⁵ þat lond, and alle þa leoden ofslagen ²⁶;
 And swa hit wes al west,²⁷ and wnnen ²⁸ biræved,
 15 Ah ²⁹ swa monie þar waren wilde deor ³⁰ þat wnder ³¹ heom puhte³²;
 And þa Troinisce men tuhten to þon deoren,
 And duden of þan wilden al heora iwilla.³³
 To þan scipen wælden.³⁴
 Heo funden i þon eitlonde ane burh ³⁵ swiðe stronge;
 20 Tohælde ³⁶ weoren þe walles, weste weren hallen.
 Temple heo funden þar ane, imaked of marmestæne,
 Muchel and mære ³⁷; þe wrse ³⁸ hit hafde to welden.³⁹

¹ took² they³ put in order⁴ raised⁵ MS. ston⁶ was favorable⁷ times⁸ departed⁹ deeply laden¹⁰ hastened¹¹ Greece¹² wild (men)¹³ tamed¹⁴ next¹⁵ voyaging¹⁶ Leogecia; position unknown¹⁷ light¹⁸ eyotland (island)¹⁹ people²⁰ men²¹ only²² desert²³ MS. pædes²⁴ outlaws²⁵ devastated²⁶ slain²⁷ waste²⁸ (of) habitations²⁹ but³⁰ animals³¹ wonder³² seemed³³ will³⁴ carried³⁵ city³⁶ tottering³⁷ glorious³⁸ devil³⁹ rule

þerinne was an onlicnesse¹ a² wifmonnes liche³;
 Feier hit wes and swiðe heih⁴; an⁵ arc⁶ hæitnesse⁷ nome,
 Diana wes ihaten⁸; þe deovel heo luede.
 Heo dude wndercraftes⁹; þe scucke¹⁰ hire fulste.¹¹
 Heo wes quen of alle wodes þe weoxen¹² on eorðen;
 A¹³ þon heðene lawen me¹⁴ heold heo for hehne¹⁵ godd.
 To hire weoren iwoned¹⁶ þa wndercrestic men;
 Of þa þingen¹⁷ þa weren to kumen heo heom wolde cuðen¹⁸
 Mid tacnen¹⁹ and mid swefnen,²⁰ þonne heo weren on skepe.
 Þe wile þeo on þan eitlonde wes folc woniende,²¹
 Heo wurðeden²² þat anlicnes; þe scucke hit²³ onfeng.²⁴
 Brutus hit herde siggen²⁵ þurh his sæmonnen
 Þe ær²⁶ weoren on þan londe, and þa lawen wusten.
 Brutus nam twelf witigen,²⁷ þe weren his wiseste men,
 And enne preost of his lawen, þa weren on þan heðen dæwen²⁸
 (Gerion hehte þe preost; he was an hirede²⁹ hæh);
 He ferde³⁰ to þere stowe³¹ þar Diane inne stod.
 Brutus ferde into þere temple, and þa twelfe mid him,
 And lette al his folc bilæven³² þerute.³³
 Ana scale³⁴ he bear an honde, al of reade golde;
 Milc wes i þere scale, and win sune dale³⁵;
 Þa milc wæs of are wite hinde, þe Brutus sceat mid his honde.
 He makede bi þon weofede³⁶ a swiðe³⁷ wunsum³⁸ fur;
 Nigen siðen³⁹ he bieode⁴⁰ þat weofed, for his neode.⁴¹
 He clepede⁴² to þere levedi⁴³ — heo wes him on heorten leof⁴⁴;

image
 in
 form
 majestic
 by
 a
 heathen religion's (?)
 called
 sorceries
 fiend
 aided
 grew
 by
 one, they
 high

16 accustomed to resort
 17 MS. kingen
 18 tell
 19 signs
 20 visions
 21 dwelling
 22 worshiped
 23 (the worship?)
 24 received
 25 say
 26 formerly
 27 prophets
 28 days
 29 among the people
 30 proceeded

31 place
 32 remain
 33 outside
 34 dish
 35 part
 36 altar
 37 most
 38 winsome
 39 times
 40 circled about
 41 need
 42 cried
 43 lady
 44 dear

Mid milden his worden he gærnde¹ hire mihten.
 Ofte he custe² þat weofed mid wnsume lates³;
 He halde⁴ þa milc in þat fur mid milden his worden :
 ' Leafdi Diana, leove Diana, hege Diana, help me to neode .

- 5 Wise⁵ mi and witere,⁶ þurh þine witful⁷ craft,
 Whuder Ich mæi liðan,⁸ and ledan mine leoden
 To ane wnsume londe, þer⁹ ich mihte wunien.¹⁰
 And gif Ich þat lond mai biȝeten,¹¹ and mi folc hit þurhgengen.¹²
 Makian Ich wille on þine nome mæren¹³ ane stowe,
 10 And Ich þe wulle huren¹⁴ mid wrhscipe hægan.¹⁵
 þus spec Brutus.

- Seoððen¹⁶ he nam þe hude¹⁷ þa wæs of þare hinde ;
 Biforen þan wefede he heo spradde, swlc¹⁸ he leie on bedde ;
 He cnelede þar ufenan,¹⁹ and seoððen he adun læi ;
 15 Swa he gon slomnen,²⁰ and þeræfter to slepen.
 þa þuhte him on his swefne, þar he on slepe læi,
 þat his lavedi Diana hine leofliche²¹ biheolde
 Mid wnsume lehtren²² ; wel heo him bihihte,²³
 And hendiliche²⁴ hire hond on his heved leide,
 20 And þus him to seide, þer he on slepe lai :
 ' Biȝende²⁵ France, i þet west, þu scalt finden a wunsum lond ;
 þat lond is biurnan²⁶ mid þære sæ ; þaron þu scalt wrþan²⁷ sæl.²⁸
 þar is fugel, þar is fisc ; þer wuniað feire deor ;
 þar is wode, þar is water ; þar is wilderne²⁹ muchel.
 25 þet lond is swiþe wunsum ; weallen³⁰ þer beoð feire ;
 Wuniað in þon londe eotanes³¹ swiðe stronge.
 Albion hatte þat lond, ah leode ne beoð þar nane.
 þerto þu scalt teman,³² and ane neowe Troye þar makian ;

¹ besought
² kissed
³ looks
⁴ poured
⁵ guide
⁶ instruct
⁷ MS. wihtful
⁸ journey
⁹ where
¹⁰ dwell
¹¹ obtain

¹² overrun
¹³ noble
¹⁴ adore
¹⁵ high
¹⁶ afterward
¹⁷ hide
¹⁸ as if
¹⁹ upon
²⁰ drowse
²¹ lovingly
²² laughter

²³ promised
²⁴ courteously
²⁵ beyond
²⁶ surrounded
²⁷ become
²⁸ prosperous
²⁹ wilderness
³⁰ wells, springs
³¹ giants ; MS. eotani
³² repair

þer scal of þine cunne¹ kinebearn² arisen,
 And scal þin mære³ kun wælden⁴ þas⁵ londes,
 Seond⁶ þa weorlð beon ihæged⁷; and þu beo hæł and isund.⁸

THE BUILDING OF LONDON

Lines 1985-2060 (Madden 1.84-7). Cf. Geoffrey 1.17. 224 5-10 may be compared with the ultimate original in Geoffrey of Monmouth, with Robert of Gloucester's version of the latter, with Wace's expansion, and with Robert of Brunne's rendering of Wace:

Geoffrey of Monmouth 1.16: 'Amœno tamen situ locorum et piscosorum fluminum copia, nemoribusque præelecta.'

Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle* (ca. 1300) 484-7:

þo Brut and is men þus come verst to londe,
 Hii wende aboute wide inou, þe contreies vor to fonde;
 Gret plente hii founde of fiis, as hii wende bi þe weie,
 Of wodes and of rivers, as is in þe contreie.

Wace, *Brut* 1245-1250:

Brutus esgarda les montaignes,
 Vit les valées, vit les plaignes,
 Les marines et les boscages,
 Et les éves et les rivages;
 Vit les cans et les praaries;
 Vit les tères bien gaagnies.

Robert (Manning) of Brunne (1338) 1889-1894:

Brutus byhel[d] þe mountaynes,
 And avised hym o þe playnes;
 Biheld þe wodes, watres, and fien,
 Where esyest wony[n]g were for men;
 Als watres ronnen wel, he byheld,
 And mede wiþ þe erylde feld.

Brutaine hefde Brutus, and Cornwaile Corineus.
 Brutus nom alle his freond, þe⁹ comen in his ferde¹⁰;
 Neh him he heom lænde,¹¹ for heo him leofe weoren.
 Corineus him cleopede to alle his icorene¹²;
 Alle he heom lænde þer heom wes alre¹³ leofest.

¹ kin
² royal progeny
³ illustrious
⁴ rule (w. gen.)
⁵ MS. þus

⁶ throughout
⁷ exalted
⁸ sound
⁹ that
¹⁰ army

¹¹ placed
¹² chosen on
¹³ of all

- Weox¹ þet folk and wel ipaih,² for ælc hefde his iwillen³;
 Inne lut⁴ ġeren firste⁵ wes þat folc swa muchel
 þat þer nas nan ende of folke swiþe hende.
 Brutus hine biþohte,⁶ and þis folc biheold;
 5 Biheold he þa muntas, feire and muchele;
 Biheold he þa medewan þat weoren swiðe mære;
 Biheold he þa wateres and þa wilde deor;
 Biheold he þa fisches; biheold he þa fugeles;
 Biheold he þa leswa⁷ and þene leofliche⁸ wode;
 10 Biheold he þene wode hu he bleou⁹; biheold he þat corn hu hit greu;
 Al he iseih on leoden þat him leof was on heorten.
 Þa biþohte he on Troyġen,¹⁰ þer his cun teone¹¹ þoleden,¹²
 And he liððe¹³ ġeond þis lond, and scæwede¹⁴ þa¹⁵ leoden.
 He funde wunsum ane stude¹⁶ uppen ane watere;
 15 Þær he gon aræren¹⁷ riche ane burhe,¹⁸
 Mid bouren and mid hallen, mid hæġe stanwalle[n].
 Þa þe burh wes imaked, þa wes he swiðe mære.¹⁹
 Þa burh wes swiðe wel idon, and he hire sette name on;
 He ġef hire²⁰ tirfulne²¹ name — Troye þe Newe,
 20 To munien²² his ikunde²³ whone²⁴ he icomen weore.
 Seoððen²⁵ þa leodene longe þerafter
 Leiden adun þene²⁶ noma, and Trinovant heo²⁷ nemneden.
 Binnen²⁸ feola²⁹ wintre hit iwerð³⁰ seoððen³¹
 þat aræs of Brutus kunne — þat wes an heh king —
 25 Lud wes ihaten.³² Þas burh he luvede swiðe;
 Þe king i þere burh wonede swiðe feola wintre.
 He lette heo Lude clepian ġond his leodfolke,
 Hehte³³ heo nemnen Kaerlud, æfter þone kinge.

¹ grew² thrive³ will (what he desired)⁴ a few⁵ time⁶ bethought⁷ pastures⁸ lovely⁹ blew¹⁰ Troy¹¹ evil¹² suffered¹³ journeyed; MS. liððe¹⁴ viewed¹⁵ MS. þea¹⁶ spot¹⁷ erect¹⁸ city¹⁹ glorious; MS. mare²⁰ MS. hire to hire²¹ glorious²² commemorate²³ lineage²⁴ from which²⁵ subsequently; MS. soððen²⁶ that²⁷ it²⁸ within²⁹ many³⁰ befell³¹ MS. seodðen³² named³³ commanded

Seoððen¹ com oþer tir² and neowe tidinde,
 þat men heo clepeden Lundin over al þas leode.
 Seoððen comen englisc men, and cleopeden heo Lundene;
 Seoððen³ comen þa frensca — þa mid sehte⁴ heo biwonnen⁵ —
 Mid heora leodþeawe,⁶ and Lundres heo hechten.⁷

THE DIVISION OF LEAR'S KINGDOM

Lines 2902-3110 (Madden 1. 123-32). Cf. Geoffrey 2. 11

Bladud hafde enne sune — Leir wes ihaten;
 Efter his fader⁸ daie he heold þis drihliche⁹ lond
 Somed¹⁰ an¹¹ his live¹² sixti winter.
 He makede ane riche burh þurh radfulle¹³ his crafte,¹⁴
 And he heo lette nemnen efter himseolvan;
 Kaer Leir hehte þe burh — leof heo wes þan kinge —
 þa we an ure leodquide¹⁵ Leirchestre¹⁶ clepiað.
 Zeare,¹⁷ a þan olde¹⁸ dawen,¹⁹ heo wes swiðe aðel²⁰ burh;
 And seoððen þer seh²¹ toward swiðe muchel seorwe,
 þat heo wes al forfaren²² þurh þere leodene væl.²³
 Sixti winter hefde Leir þis lond al to welden.
 þe king hefde preo dohtren bi his drihliche quen;
 Nefde he nenne sune — þerfore he warð sari —
 His manscipe²⁴ to halden, buten²⁵ þa preo dohtren.
 þa ældeste dohter haihte Gornouille, þa oðer Ragau, þa þridde
 Cordouille —
 Heo wes þa zungeste suster, a²⁶ wliten²⁷ alre vairesst;
 Heo wes hire fader al swa leof swa his azene lif.
 þa ældede²⁸ þe king, and wakede²⁹ an aðelan³⁰;

3. seoððen

ory

MS. sedðen

battle

won

national customs

called (it)

father's

noble

together

11 in

12 lifetime

13 prudent

14 skill

15 language

16 Leicester

17 formerly

18 MS. holde

19 days

20 noble

21 came

22 destroyed

23 slaughter

24 dignity, lordship

25 only

26 in

27 beauty

28 grew old

29 became weak

30 power

And he hine biþohte wet he don mahte
Of¹ his kineriche² æfter his drie.

He seide to himselven þat þat uel³ was :

' Ic wille mine riche todon⁴ allen⁵ minen dohtren,

And ȝeven hem mine kineþeode,⁶ and twemen⁷ mine[n] bearnen,⁸

Ac ærst Ic wille fondien⁹ whulche¹⁰ heo mi beste freond,

And heo seal habbe þat beste del of mine drihtlichen lon[d].¹¹

þas þe king þohte, and þeræfter he worhte.

He clepede Gornouille, his¹² godfulle¹³ dohter,

Ut of hire bure to hire fader deore;

And þus¹⁴ spac þe alde king, þer he on æðelen¹⁵ seat :

' Sei me, Gornouille, soðere¹⁶ worden :

Swiðe dure¹⁷ þeo eart me; hu leof æm Ich þe?

Ifu mochel worp¹⁸ levest¹⁹ þu me to walden kineriche?'

Gornouille was swiðe wær²⁰ — swa beoð wifmen wel ihwær²¹ —

And seide ane lesinge heore²² fædere þon king :

' Leofe fæder dure, swa bide²³ Ich Godes are²⁴ —

Swa helpe me Apollin, for min ilæse²⁵ is al on him —

þat levere²⁶ þeo²⁷ ært me æne²⁸ þanc þis world al clane²⁹ :

And ȝet³⁰ Ic þe wille speken wit³¹ : þeou ært leovere þene mi lif;

And þis Ich sugge³² þe to soðe³³; þu miht³⁴ me wel ileve.³⁵

Leir þe king ilefde his dohter³⁶ læisinge,

And þas ænsware ȝef — þat wæs þe olde king :

' Ich þe, Gornouille, sugge³⁷ leove dohter dure,

God³⁸ scal beon þi meda³⁹ for þira gretinge.

Ic eam, for mire ældde,⁴⁰ sw[i]þe unbalded,⁴¹

1 with

2 kingdom

3 evil

4 divide

5 MS. & allen

6 kingdom

7 apportion

8 children

9 test

10 MS. whulchere

11 MS. hes

12 goodly; MS. gūd.

13 MS. þeus

14 state

15 with true

16 dear

17 MS. worȝ

18 (?) ; MS. leste

19 wary, cunning

20 everywhere

21 to her

22 hope for

23 mercy

24 belief

25 dearer

26 thou

27 alone

28 entire

29 yet more

30 with

31 say

32 MS. soðe

33 mayst; MS. mith

34 believe

35 daughter's; MS. doster

36 say; MS. seuge

37 good

38 reward

39 old age

40 enfeebled

And þou me lovest ¹ sw[i]þe mare þan is on live.
 Ich wille mi drihliche ² lond a þreo ³ al todalen ⁴;
 Þin is þat beste deal; þu ært mi dohter deore,
 And scalt habben to laverd min alre beste þein ⁵
 þeo Ich mai vinden in mine kinnelonde. ⁶

Æfter spac þe olde kinge wit his [ofer] ⁷ dohter:
 'Leove dohter Regau, wart seist tu ⁸ me to raide ⁹?
 Seie þu bifore mire dugden ¹⁰ heo ¹¹ dure Ich am þe an herten.
 þa answarede [Regau] mid rætfulle ¹² worden:
 'Al þat is on live nis nig ¹³ swa dure
 Swa me is þin an lime, ¹⁴ forðe ¹⁵ min ahgene ¹⁶ lif.'
 Ah heo ne seide naþing soð, ¹⁷ no more þenne hire suste[r];
 Alle hire lesinge hire vader ilefede.
 þa answarede þe king — his ¹⁸ doxter him icwemde ¹⁹:
 'þea þridde del of mine londe Ich bitake ²⁰ þe an honde;
 þu scalt nime ²¹ loved ²² þer þe is alre leowost.'
 þa ȝet nolde ²³ þe leodking ²⁴ his sotscipe ²⁵ bilæven ²⁶;
 He hehte ²⁷ cumen him biforen his dohter Gordoille.
 Heo was alre ȝungest, of soðe ȝærwitelest, ²⁸
 And þe king heo lovede more þanne þa tueie ²⁹ þe oðre.
 Cordoille iherde þa lasinge þe hire sustren seiden þon kinge;
 Nom ³⁰ hire leaffulne ³¹ huic ³² þat heo liȝen ³³ nolden —
 Hire fader heo wolde suge soð, ³⁴ were him lef, ³⁵ were him lað. ³⁶
 þeo queð þe alde king — unræd ³⁷ him fulede ³⁸:
 'Iheren Ich wille of þe, Cordoille —
 Swa þe helpe Appolin — hu deore þe beo lif min.'
 þa answarede Cordoille, lude ³⁹ and no wiht stille,

¹ MS. levoste

² MS. dirh-

³ in three; MS. þroe

⁴ divide

⁵ thane

⁶ realm

⁷ second

⁸ thou

⁹ as opinion

¹⁰ men; MS. dugden

¹¹ how

¹² prudent

¹³ nigh

¹⁴ limb

¹⁵ before (?)

¹⁶ own

¹⁷ true; MS. seð

¹⁸ MS. hiis

¹⁹ pleased

²⁰ deliver

²¹ take

²² husband

²³ would not

²⁴ king

²⁵ folly; MS. soth-

²⁶ abandon

²⁷ commanded

²⁸ most gifted

²⁹ both (both two)

³⁰ made up

³¹ faithful

³² mind (OE. *hyge*)

³³ lie

³⁴ MS. seoð

³⁵ agreeable

³⁶ disagreeable

³⁷ unwisdom; MS. unræd

³⁸ followed

³⁹ loudly

- Mid gomene¹ and mid lehtre to hire fader-leve :
 ' þeo art me leof al so² mi fæder, and Ich þe al so þi do
 Ich habbe to þe soþfaste³ love, for⁴ we buoð swiþe isibl
 And — swa Ich ibide⁵ are — Ich wille þe suge mare :
 5 Al swa muchel þu bist worþ⁷ swa þu weldende⁸ ært,
 And al swa muchel swa þu havest men þe willeþ⁹ luvien,
 For sone he¹⁰ bið ilaged,¹¹ þe mon þe lutel ah.¹²
 þus seide þe mæiden Cordoille, and seoððen set sw[i]þe
 þa iwarðe¹³ þe king wræð¹⁴ for he nes noht¹⁵ iquemed,
 10 And wende on [h]is þonke¹⁷ þat¹⁸ hit weren for unðeaw
 þat he hire weore swa unwourð þat heo hine nolde iwur
 Swa hire twa sustren, þe ba somed²¹ læsinge speken.
 þe king Leir iwerðe²² swa blac swlch²³ hit a blac cloð v
 Iwærð his hude²⁴ and his heowe,²⁵ for he was suþe²⁶ ih
 15 Mid þære wræððe he wes isweved,²⁸ þat²⁹ he feol iswow
 Late³¹ þeo he up fusde³² — þat mæiden wes afeared ;
 þa hit alles up brac — hit wes uvel³³ þat he spac :
 ' Hær[c]ne,³⁴ Cordoille, Ich þe telle wille³⁵ mine wille :
 Of mine dohtren þu were me durest ; nu þu æart me alre³⁶
 20 Ne scalt þu næver halden dale of mine lande,
 Ah mine[n] dohtren Ich wille delen mine riche,³⁸
 And þu scalt worðen wræchen,³⁹ and wonien in wansiðe
 For navere Ich ne wende⁴¹ þat þu me woldes þus scand
 þarfore þu scalt beon dæd,⁴³ Ich wene ; fliz⁴⁴ ut of min
 25 þine sustren sculen habben mi kinelond ; and þis me is

1 mirth (game)

2 as

3 true ; MS. soh-

4 because

5 related

6 expect

7 worth

8 ruling ; MS. velden

9 MS. wilet

10 MS. heo

11 brought low ; MS. ilageð

12 possesses

13 became

14 wroth ; MS. wærð

15 MS. þeo noht

16 gratified

17 thought

18 MS. þaht

19 undutifulness

20 honor

21 both together

22 grew

23 as if

24 skin

25 hue

26 much

27 grieved

28 stupefied

29 so that

30 in a swoon

31 after a time

32 started

33 evil

34 hearkn

35 will

36 of all ;

37 most l

38 realm

39 exile ;

40 misery

41 suppo

42 shame

43 dead

44 fly

45 sight

46 agreee

þe Duc of Cornwaile scal habbe Gornioille,
 And þe Scottene king Regau þat scone,¹
 And Ic hem ȝeue al þa winne² þe Ich æm waldinge³ over.⁴
 And al þe alde king dude⁴ swa he hafvede⁶ idemed.⁶
 Of[t] wes þen⁷ mæidene wa,⁸ and nævre wors þenne þa⁹;
 Wa¹⁰ hire wes on mode¹¹ for hire fader wræpe.¹²
 Heo wende¹³ into hire boure, þar heo ofte sætte sare,¹⁴
 For heo nolde ligen hire¹⁵ fader¹⁶ leove.

CAESAR'S BATTLE WITH THE BRITONS

Lines 7472-7662 (Madden i. 319-27). Cf. Geoffrey 4. 3, 4

He¹⁷ cleopede on his cnihtes: 'Ȝarewieð¹⁸ eow to fihte,
 For nu is mid ferde¹⁹ icumen Cassibellaunus.'
 Heo liðede²⁰ togadere mid heore speren longe,
 Mid axen, mid sweorden, mid scærpe speres orde²¹;
 Hardliche²² heo heowen²³; hælmes þer gollen²⁴;
 Feon[d]liche²⁵ heo feohten; hafdes²⁶ þer feollen.
 And Cesar þe keisere wes unimete²⁷ kene²⁸;
 His longe sweord he adroh,²⁹ and moni mon permide³⁰ asloh³¹;
 He swonc³² i þon fehte þat al he lavede³³ a sweote.³⁴
 He sloh þa³⁵ him neh³⁶ weoren — alle buten³⁷ iferen³⁸;
 He dude þer muchelne³⁹ wundre; he sloh þer an hundred
 Of ahtere⁴⁰ monnen, þe feond⁴¹ mid his mæche.⁴²
 þat isch Androgeus, and cleopede his fader Nennius,

fair
 possessions (?)
 ruler
 did
 had
 decided
 to the
 woe
 then
 MS. þa
 heart
 wrath; MS. wærpe
 MS. vende
 sorrowful

16 to her
 16 MS. fadder
 17 Cæsar
 18 prepare
 19 army
 20 came
 21 point
 22 stoutly
 23 hewed
 24 resounded
 25 fiercely
 26 heads
 27 beyond measure
 28 brave

29 drew
 30 therewith
 31 MS. asloð
 32 labored
 33 dripped
 34 sweat
 35 those that
 36 near
 37 without
 38 companions (help)
 39 a great
 40 valiant
 41 enemy
 42 sword

- And beiene ¹ þa eorles buȝen ² heom togaderes,
 Mid swiðe muchele folke; togæderen stoden faste.
 Iseȝen ³ heo Julius Cesar fæhten al swa a wilde bar,
 And heo him to fusden ⁴ mid ladliche ⁵ fehte,
 5 And monie of heore feonden heo fælden to þon grunde
 þa iseh Nennius wær ⁶ fæht Cesar Julius,
 And he him to rasde ⁷ mid ræhæm ⁸ his sweorde;
 Uppen þene helm he hine smat þat þet sweord in bat.
 Selkuð ⁹ hit þuhte ¹⁰ moni cnihte
 10 þat he durste cumen him næh, for þan þa þe keisere ¹¹
 Julius Cesar ne queð nan word, ah he bræid ¹² ut his s
 And Nennium he smat þa uppen þene helm swa
 þat þe helm tohælde, ¹⁴ and þat hæfde ¹⁵ bledde;
 Ah he ne blakede ¹⁶ no, for he wes cniht wel idon. ¹⁷
 15 And Julius noht ne na bræð, ¹⁸ ah his brond ¹⁹ he up ah
 And Nennius hæf up his sceld, scilde ²¹ hine sulte.
 Julius adun smat, ²² and þat sweord a ²³ ðene scelde bat
 Julius hit wraste, ²⁵ and þat sweord stike[de] ²⁶ feste;
 Julius þat sweord heold, and Nennius þene sceld,
 20 And þus heo hit longe bituȝen, ²⁷ ne mihte he þat sweord
 þat isæh Androgeus hu verden ²⁹ Cesar and Nennius,
 And he ³⁰ hem to fusde, Nennius ³¹ to fulste. ³²
 þa isæh Cesar tiðend ³³ þat him wes sær;
 He forlette ³⁴ þene brand — þa nefde he noht on his h
 25 And he þa feondliche ³⁵ turnde to flæme. ³⁶
 Nennius wende i þane felde, and he turnde his scelde,
 Droh ut þene brande. þa wes þe eorl swiȝe bald:

¹ both² turned³ saw⁴ hurried⁵ hostile⁶ where⁷ rushed⁸ fierce⁹ strange¹⁰ MS. þuðte¹¹ emperor¹² awe-inspiring¹³ drew¹⁴ gave way¹⁵ head¹⁶ paled¹⁷ trained¹⁸ paused for breath (?); but the text is probably corrupt. (The later MS. has: mid þe seolve breþ.)¹⁹ sword²⁰ lifted²¹ shielded²² smote²³ in²⁴ bit

Monie Romanisce men mid þon sweorde he leide adun;
 He wes moni¹ monnes bone,² and moni anne³ he dude scome.
 Al þat he mid þan sweorde smat, þerriht⁴ hit⁵ iwat⁶;
 Al þat he þer mid⁷ atran,⁸ weore hit flæs,⁹ weore hit ban,
 Þurh þeos sweordes wunde heo fullen to þon grunde.
 Alle dæi wes þat fiht,¹⁰ a¹¹ þet com þe þestere¹² niht.

Julius þe kaisere mid alle þan Romanisce here
 Dalden¹³ from þan fihte al bi þustere nihte;
 To hærbærge¹⁴ heo wenden uppen þære sæ stronde;
 Heo bilefden¹⁵ biæften¹⁶ twenti hundred cnihten
 Þeo leien under scelden, islægen ðeond þon felden.
 Cesar iwende to his bedde; his men weoren ofdredde.¹⁷
 Hine¹⁸ biwakeden¹⁹ in þere nihte þritti hundred cnihten,
 Mid helmen and mid burnen,²⁰ and mid stelene sweorden.
 Julius Cesar he wes ðep²¹ and swuðe iwær²²;
 He isæh his muchele lure,²³ and of mare²⁴ he hæfde kare;
 He aras to þan midnihte, and bannede²⁵ his cnihtes,
 And seide heom þat heo wolden faren and fleon of þissen londe,
 Faren into Flandre, and beo[n] þer wuniende
 A²⁶ þat he isege²⁷ his time þat heo²⁸ mihten æft cumen liðen.²⁹
 Heo ferden forþ³⁰ rihte to scipe al bi nihte;
 Heo hæfden swiðe fair weder, and wenden into Flandre.
 A margen, þa hit dæi wes, þe king mid his dugeðe³¹
 ðarekede³² his ferde, and wende to þan fihte.
 Þo³³ was Romanisce folc ivaren³⁴ from here londe,³⁵
 þat³⁶ ne funden heo naver enne³⁷ of Cesares monnen.

¹ MS. moniennes

² slayer

³ a one

⁴ straightway

⁵ it (= they)

⁶ died

⁷ therewith

⁸ reached, touched

⁹ flesh

¹⁰ MS. fehti

¹¹ till

¹² dark

¹³ departed

¹⁴ shelter, harborage

¹⁵ left

¹⁶ behind

¹⁷ dismayed

¹⁸ him; MS. inne

¹⁹ wakened

²⁰ cuirasses

²¹ astute

²² wary

²³ loss

²⁴ more, further; MS. mære

²⁵ summoned

²⁶ until

²⁷ should see; MS. isegeu

²⁸ MS. he

²⁹ sailing

³⁰ MS. forh

³¹ knighthood

³² made ready

³³ MS. þeo

³⁴ passed

³⁵ MS. sonde

³⁶ so that

³⁷ one

þa weoren Bruttes bliðe¹ an heore mode;
 Muchel wes þa blisse þat heo makeden mid iwisse,²
 And³ sone þeræfter særi heo wurden.⁴
 And Cassibellaune þe king iwarð særi þurh alle þing,⁵
 5 For Nennius his broðer ne mihte finden bote⁶
 Of his hæfved-wunde þe Julius smat mid honde,
 Ne þurh nenne læchecræfte⁷ ne mihte he lif habben.
 Nes þer nan oðer ræd⁸ buten Nennius iwarð dæd,⁹
 And Nennius was ilæid¹⁰ at þon norðgæte i Lundene.
 10 þe king næm enne marmestan, and lette hine mid golde bigon,¹¹
 Mid golde and mid gimme¹²; his broðer he leide þerinne;
 Mid richedome¹³ þa Bruttes Nennium biburden.¹⁴
 Nu þu miht¹⁵ iheren selkuð¹⁶ word: þe king nom þat ilke¹⁷ sweord
 þat Nennius his broðer biwan of Julius Cesare,
 15 And læide hit bi his broðer, þah¹⁸ hit his bone¹⁹ weore.
 Wæs þe stelene brond swiðe brad and swiðe long;
 þeron weoren igraven feole cunne²⁰ bocstaven²¹;
 A²² ðere hilde wes igraven
 þat þa sweord wes icleoped²³ inne Rome *Crocia Mors*²⁴ —
 20 Swa þat sweord hæhte, for hit havede muchele mahte.²⁵
 þermide þe keisere prætede²⁶ ælches londes here²⁷;
 For nas nævere þe ilke bern²⁸ þe avere iboren weore,
 þat of þen ilke sweorde enne²⁹ swipe³⁰ hefde,
 þat³¹ he of his likame³² lette ænne drope blod,
 25 þat he nes sone dæd, neore he noht³³ swa dohti.
 Julius mid his ferde læi inne Flandre;
 þa word com to France hou³⁴ he ivaren hæfde,

¹ joyful² with certainty, in truth³ but⁴ MS. wurden⁵ in every way⁶ cure⁷ medical skill⁸ remedy⁹ MS. dæð¹⁰ laid¹¹ adorn¹² precious stone(s)¹³ splendor¹⁴ buried¹⁵ mayst¹⁶ strange¹⁷ very¹⁸ though; MS. þat¹⁹ slayer²⁰ kinds²¹ letters (cf. Ger. *Buchstaben*)²² on; MS. æ²³ called²⁴ Saffron Death²⁵ might²⁶ menace²⁷ army²⁸ man²⁹ a³⁰ blow³¹ so that³² body³³ never³⁴ MS. he

And hu he wæs mid his fæerde iſtremde¹ of piſſen earde.²
 þa³ weoren þa Frenſce men þe fore ſwiþe vaine,⁴
 For toward Julius heo hæfden grome,⁵ and forþi weoren frein
 of his ſcome.⁶

CYMBELINE AND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Lines 9064-9185 (Madden 1.386-91). Cf. Geoffrey 4.11

On Kinbelines dæie, þe king wes inne Bruttene,
 Com a piſſen middelærde⁷ anes maidenen Sune;
 Iboren wes in Beðleem of bezste⁸ alre burden.⁹
 He is ihaten Jesu Crist þurh þene Halie Gost,
 Alre worulde Wunne,¹⁰ Walden[d]¹¹ englenne.¹²
 Fæder he is on hevenen, Frovre¹³ moncunnes¹⁴;
 Sune he is on eorðen of sele¹⁵ þon mæidene;
 And þene Halie Gost haldeð¹⁶ mid himseolven.
 Þene Gaſt he wel daleð¹⁷ to þan þe him beoð leove,
 Al ſwa he dude Peture, þe wes a wræche¹⁸ fiſcære,
 Þe makede hine an mancunne hehſt¹⁹ of alre manne.

Kinbelin, Bruttene king, wes god mon þurh alle þing;
 And he luvede²⁰ here twa and twenti ȝere.
 An his dæie her luvede a mon inne piſſe leoden —
 Feorliche²¹ þing fuleden²² him — he wes ihaten Teilesin²³;
 Heo heolden²⁴ hine for witie²⁵ þurh his witfulne²⁶ cræfte,
 And al heo hit ilæfden²⁷ þat Teilesin heom ſeide.
 He ſeide heom ſeolkuð²⁸ inoh, and al heo hit funden soð;
 He ſeide heom ælche ȝere wæt heom to cumen weore.
 Þe king him ſende æfter wiſe twalf cnihtes,
 Bad²⁹ hine comen him³⁰ to — þat he nan oðer³¹ ſcolde³² don :

¹ put to flight

² country

³ MS. þat

⁴ fain, glad

⁵ grudge

⁶ shame

⁷ world

⁸ the best

⁹ women

¹⁰ joy

¹¹ lord

¹² of angels

¹³ comfort

¹⁴ of mankind

¹⁵ blissful

¹⁶ he holdeth

¹⁷ imparts

¹⁸ forlorn

¹⁹ highest

²⁰ lived

²¹ wondrous

²² followed

²³ Taliesin

²⁴ held; MS. heolten

²⁵ prophet

²⁶ wise

²⁷ believed

²⁸ marvel

²⁹ bade; MS. bað

³⁰ Cymbeline

³¹ other thing

³² should; MS. seolden

- And heo hine bro[h]ten sone biforen þen folkekinge.
 Anan swa¹ þe king hine imette, fæire he hine igrette :
 ' Swa me helpen min hefde and mi chin, wulcume ært þu, Teilesin,
 And leovere me is þine isunden² þenne a þusend punden.'
 5 þa andswerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin :
 ' Swa ich mote gode iþeon,³ al⁴ þu hit⁵ sælt⁶ wel biteon.⁷
 þa wes glad Kinbelin, and þus seide to Teilesin :
 ' Her beoð to þisse londe icumen seolcuðe leodronen,⁸
 And fromward⁹ þeon¹⁰ londe of Jerusalem; iwurden¹¹ heo beoð in
 Beðleem.
 10 þer is iboren an luttel child inne þere leoden.¹²
 Muchele is and stor¹³ þe eige¹⁴; tacnen¹⁵ þer beoð on sterren,
 An monen, and on seonnen¹⁶; eie¹⁷ is on moncunnen.
 þis is widen¹⁸ icuð¹⁹ and þa writen²⁰ me beoð to icume,
 And Ic wolde iwiten æt²¹ þe — þu ært mi wine²² deore —
 15 To whan²³ þis tocne wule ten,²⁴ to wulche þinge temen,²⁵
 For herfore²⁶ is alches londes folc lædliche²⁷ afered.'
 þa answerede Teilesin, and þus seide to Kinbelin :
 ' Hit wes gare²⁸ iqueðen²⁹ — þa quides³⁰ beoð nu soðe —
 þat scolden beon a child iboren, of alle folke icoren,³¹
 20 And þat scolde beon ihaten Hælend,³² and helpen his freondes,
 Alesen³³ his leofve wines of læðe³⁴ heore bendes,³⁵
 Of³⁶ helle bringen Adam, Noe, and Abraham,
 Sadoc and Samiel, and Symeon þene alde,
 Josep an[d] Benjamin, and alle his broðeres mid him,
 25 Johel and Eliseon, Asor and Naason,
 Ysaac and his broðer, and moni enne³⁷ oðer,

¹ the moment that² health, welfare³ well thrive⁴ everything⁵ refers to *al*⁶ shalt⁷ accomplish⁸ secret tidings⁹ from; MS. -warð¹⁰ the¹¹ come to pass; MS. iwurðen¹² country¹³ mighty, overwhelming¹⁴ alarm, misgiving¹⁵ signs¹⁶ sun¹⁷ fear¹⁸ widely¹⁹ known²⁰ writings²¹ know from²² friend²³ which²⁴ tend²⁵ lead²⁶ on account of this²⁷ sore²⁸ long ago²⁹ announced³⁰ assertions³¹ choicest³² Saviour, Jesus³³ deliver³⁴ hateful³⁵ bonds³⁶ from³⁷ a one

Moni hundred þusend þe ipud¹ beoð to hellen :

And for swulchere² neode he is icumen to þere þeoden.³

Þeos word seide Teilesin, and alle heo weoren soðe.

Þa þan⁴ kinge weoren⁵ icudde þas guides þa weoren soðe,

þa weoren þa tiðinde cuðe Ʒeond his kineriche ;

Bruttes herof Ʒemden,⁶ and noht hit ne forƷeten.

Kinbelin wes god king, and griðful⁷ þurh alle þing,⁸

And þa Romleoden⁹ swiðe hine lueden ;

And Ʒif þe king wolde¹⁰ wið¹¹ heom wiðerhalden,¹²

He mihte¹³ æthalden¹⁴ heore feoh¹⁵ þe Julius her¹⁶ fætte¹⁷ ;

Ah ævere mare¹⁸ bi¹⁹ his live he hit heom leofliche²⁰ Ʒeaf.

Seoððe²¹ him comen þæ tiðinde of Crist, Godes childe,

Ne leovede²² þe king mare buten ten Ʒere :

Seoððen þe king bilæfden²³ his lif ; inne Eowverwike²⁴ he Ʒet lið.²⁵

THE OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLE: THE REIGN OF STEPHEN (A.D. 1137)

The *Old English Chronicle* is of priceless value for the early history of England. Toward the end the language passes over into an early form of Middle English. Modern historians have often drawn upon this passage in characterizing the reign of Stephen.

Our text is from *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. Plummer and Earle, pp. 263-5, with contractions expanded.

Þa-þe²⁶ King Stephne to Englalande com, þa macod he his gader-
ing²⁷ æt Oxeneford, and þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Sereberi,²⁸
and Alexander, Biscop of Lincol, and te Canceler Roger, hise neves,²⁹
and dide ælle in prisun til hi iafen³⁰ up here castles. Þa the suikes³¹

¹ consigned

² such

³ peoples

⁴ to the

⁵ MS. wes

⁶ took note

⁷ peaceable

⁸ in all ways

⁹ Romans

¹⁰ had wished

¹¹ against

¹² rebel ; MS. -heolden

¹³ might have ; MS. miðte

¹⁴ withhold

¹⁵ tribute

¹⁶ from here

¹⁷ fetched

¹⁸ MS. mære

¹⁹ during

²⁰ submissively, loyally

²¹ after

²² lived

²³ departed

²⁴ York

²⁵ lies

²⁶ when

²⁷ assembly

²⁸ Salisbury

²⁹ nephews

³⁰ gave

³¹ traitors

undergæton¹ ðat he milde man was and softe and god, and na justise ne dide, þa diden hi alle wunder. Hi hadden him manred² maked and athes suoren, ac³ hi nan treuthe ne heolden; alle hi⁴ wæron forsworen and here treotthes forloren, for ævric⁵ rice man his castles
 5 makede and agænes him heolden, and fylðen þe land ful of castles. Hi swuncen⁶ suyðe þe wrecce men of þe land mid castelweorces.⁷ Þa þe castles wæren maked, þa fylðen hi [hi] mid deovles and yvele men. Þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god⁸ hefðen, bathe be nihtes and be dæies, carlmen⁹ and wimmen, and diden heom in prisun,
 10 efter¹⁰ gold and sylver, and pined¹¹ heom untellendlice¹² pining. For ne wæren nævre nan martyrs swa pined alse hi wæron; me¹³ henged up bi the fet and smoked heom mid ful¹⁴ smoke; me henged bi the þumbes other bi the hefed,¹⁵ and hengen bryniges¹⁶ on her fet; me dide cnotted strenges abuton here hæved, and wrythen¹⁷ to ðat it
 15 gæde¹⁸ to þe hæernes.¹⁹ Hi dyden heom in quarterne,²⁰ þar nadres²¹ and snakes and pades²² wæron inne, and drapen²³ heom swa. Sume hi diden in crucethus,²⁴ ðat is in an cæste²⁵ þat was scort and næreu and undep, and dide scærpe stanes þerinne, and þrengde²⁶ þe man þærinne ðat him bræcon alle þe limes. In mani of þe castles wæron
 20 lof²⁷ and grin,²⁸ ðat wæron rachenteges²⁹ ðat twa oþer thre men hadden onoh to bæron onne³⁰; þat was sua maced, ðat is fæstned to an beom,³¹ and diden an scærp iren abuton þe³² mannes throte and his hals,³³ ðat he ne myhte nowiderwardes,³⁴ ne sitten ne lien ne slopen, oc bæron al ðat iren. Mani þusen[d] hi drapen mid hungær.
 25 I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder, ne alle þe pines, ðat hi diden wrecce men on þis land; and ðat lastede þa xix wintre wile Stephne was king, and ævre it was werse and werse. Hi læiden

¹ understood, perceived² homage³ but⁴ MS. he⁵ every⁶ oppressed⁷ the making of castles⁸ property⁹ men¹⁰ in pursuit of¹¹ tortured¹² unspeakable¹³ they¹⁴ foul¹⁵ head¹⁶ coats of mail¹⁷ twisted¹⁸ till it went¹⁹ brain²⁰ prison²¹ adders²² toads²³ killed²⁴ torture-box²⁵ chest²⁶ pressed, jammed²⁷ device (?)²⁸ contrivance²⁹ chains, fetters³⁰ one³¹ beam, rafter³² MS. þa³³ neck³⁴ (go) in no direction

gældes¹ on the tunes ævre um wile,² and clepeden it tenseric.³ Þa
 þe wrecce men ne hadden nan more to gyven, þa ræveden⁴ hi and
 brendon⁵ alle the tunes, ðat,⁶ wel⁷ þu myhtes faren all a dæis fare,⁸
 sculdest thu nevre finden man in tune sittende ne land tiled.⁹ Þa
 was corn dære,¹⁰ and flesc¹¹ and cæse¹² and butere, for nan ne
 was o þe land. Wrecce men sturven¹³ of hungær; sume ieden¹⁴ on
 ælmes þe waren sum wile¹⁵ rice men; sume flugen¹⁶ ut of lande.
 Wes nævre gæt mare wrecched¹⁷ on land, ne nævre hethen men
 werse ne diden þan hi diden; for ower¹⁸ sithon¹⁹ ne forbaren²⁰ hi
 nouthur circe²¹ ne cyrceiærd,²² oc namen al þe god ðat þarinne was.
 and brenden sythen þe cyrce, and al tegædere. Ne hi ne forbaren
 biscopes land, ne abbotes, ne preostes, ac ræveden munekes and
 clerekes, and ævric man other²³ þe ower²⁴ myhte. Gif twa men oþer
 iii a coman ridend to an tun, al þe tunscepe flugæn for heom; wenden
 ðat hi wæron ræveres.²⁵ Þe biscopes and lered men heom cursede²⁶
 ævre, oc was heom naht þarof, for hi weron al forcursæd and for-
 suoren and forloren. Warsæ²⁷ me tilede, þe erthe ne bar nan corn,
 for þe land was al fordon mid sulce dædes, and hi sæden openlice
 ðat Crist slop and his halechen.²⁸ Suile and mare þanne we cunnen
 sæin, we þoleden²⁹ xix wintre for ure sinnes.

20

BARBOUR, THE BRUCE

The *Bruce* was composed in 1375 by a northern contemporary of Chaucer, John Barbour (1320 (?)–1395), who was for thirty-eight years archdeacon of Aberdeen. Of Barbour's life comparatively little is known, but we learn that he received permits from the king to study at Oxford and in France, and was granted various pensions. Besides the *Bruce*, he wrote a poem called *The Brut*, and a genealogy of the Stuart family, both of which are lost.

¹ tributes; MS. gældes² from time to time³ name given to a tax exacted
from vassals in return for
protection⁴ plundered⁵ burned⁶ so that⁷ though⁸ journey⁹ tilled¹⁰ dear, expensive¹¹ MS. flec¹² cheese¹³ died, perished¹⁴ went, lived¹⁵ at one time¹⁶ fled¹⁷ wretchedness¹⁸ everywhere; MS. ouer¹⁹ afterwards²⁰ abstained from²¹ church²² churchyard²³ each man his neighbor²⁴ anywhere; MS. ouer²⁵ robbers²⁶ excommunicated²⁷ wheresoeuer²⁸ saints²⁹ endured; MS. þolenden

The *Bruce* is called by its author a romance, though it has often been dealt with and criticized as history. 'We are hardly to regard it in the light of an exact history, but rather as a succession of episodes telling us various stories about the great perils and adventures of the heroes, the chief of whom are Robert Bruce, his brother Edward, Sir James Douglas, and Sir Thomas Randolph, afterwards Earl of Murray' (Skeat), the period covered being 1286-1332. The poem is divided into twenty books, and is written in the dialect of southern Scotland. While certain parts of it are undeniably tedious, it is of real interest for its national spirit, and has been influential upon so late a fellow-countryman of Barbour's as Sir Walter Scott. Barbour's unique position is that 'of being the father both of vernacular Scottish poetry and Scottish history' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*).

Our text is taken from that of Skeat, as edited for the Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh, 1894), with the omission of square brackets, substitution of *s* for *ss* (representing a single sound), and writing of *π* as *u*, etc. Skeat's text is based on the Edinburgh manuscript, written in 1489, collated with the Cambridge MS. G. 23, and with several early editions. Our selections include lines 353-406 of Book 1, 352-452 of Book 10, and 18-49, 139-66, and 272-323 of Book 13. It is to be noted that *v* and *w* are frequently interchanged.

SIR JAMES DOUGLAS

To Sanct Androws he come in hy,¹
 Quhar² the byschop full curtasly
 Resavyt him, and gert³ him wer
 His knyvyys,⁴ forouch⁵ him to scher⁶;
 And cled him rycht honorably,
 And gert ordayn quhar he suld ly.
 A weile⁷ gret quhile thar duellyt he;
 All men lufyt him for his bounte,
 For he wes off full fayr effer,⁸
 Wys, curtais, and deboner;
 Larg⁹ and luffand als wes he,
 And our¹⁰ all thing luffyt lawte.¹¹
 Leaute to luff¹² is gretumly¹³;
 Throuch leaute liffis men rychtwisly;

¹ haste
² where
³ made
⁴ knives, daggers
⁵ before

⁶ carve at table
⁷ very (well)
⁸ behavior
⁹ generous
¹⁰ over, above

¹¹ loyalty
¹² to be loved
¹³ greatly

With a wertu¹ of leaute
 A man may zeit sufficyand be;
 And but² leawte may nane haiff price,³
 Quhethir he be wycht⁴ or he be wys;
 For quhar it failzeys, na wertu
 May be off⁵ price, na off valu,
 To mak a man sa gud that he
 May symply gud man callyt be.
 He wes in all his dedis lele⁶;
 For him dedeyngeit⁷ nocht to dele
 With trechery, na with falset.⁸
 His hart on hey honour wes set;
 And hym contenyt⁹ on sic¹⁰ maner
 That all him luffyt that war him ner.

Bot he wes nocht sa fayr that we
 Suld spek gretly off his beaute:
 In wysage wes he sumdeill gray,
 And had blak har, as Ic hard say;
 Bot off lymmys he wes weill maid,
 With banys¹¹ gret and schuldrys braid.
 His body wes weyll maid and lenye,¹²
 As thai that saw hym said to me.
 Quhen he wes blyth, he wes luffy,
 And meyk and sweyt in cumpany;
 Bot quha in battaill mycht him se,
 All othir contenance had he.
 And in spek¹³ wlispyt¹⁴ he sum deill,
 Bot that sat¹⁵ him rycht wondre weill.
 Till¹⁶ gud Ector of Troy mycht he
 In mony thingis liknyt be.
 Ector had blak har as he had,

⁷ deigned⁸ falsehood⁹ he demeaned himself¹⁰ such¹¹ bones¹² lean, thin¹³ speech¹⁴ lisped¹⁵ became¹⁶ to⁴ vigorous⁵ of⁶ leal, loyal

And stark¹ lymmys, and rycht weill maid;
 And wlispyt alsua as did he,
 And wes fullfilyt² of leawte,
 And wes curtais, and wys, and wycht.³
 Bot off manheid and mekill mycht,
 Till Ector dar I nane comper
 Off all that evir in warldys wer.
 The quhethyr⁴ in his tyme sa wrocht he,
 That he suld gretly lovyt be.

THE WINNING OF ROXBURGH CASTLE

This tym that the gud erll Thomas
 Assegit,⁵ as the lettir⁶ sais,
 Edinburgh, James of Douglas
 Set all his vit for till purchas⁷
 How Roxburgh, throu subtilite
 Or ony craft, mycht wonnyn be;
 Till he gert Sym of the Ledows —
 A crafty man and a curious —
 Of hempyn rapis⁸ ledderis ma,⁹
 With treyn¹⁰ steppis bundin swa,
 That vald¹¹ brek apoun na kyn wis.¹²
 A cruk¹³ thai maid, at thair deuis,¹⁴
 Of irn,¹⁵ that wes styth¹⁶ and square;
 That, fra¹⁷ it ane kyrnaill¹⁸ ware,
 And the leddir tharfra stratly¹⁹
 Strekit,²⁰ it suld stand sekirly.²¹

This lord of Douglas than, alsoyn²²
 As this devisit wes and done,

¹ strong

² filled full

³ brave

⁴ nevertheless

⁵ besieged

⁶ written account

⁷ devise, contrive

⁸ ropes

⁹ make

¹⁰ wooden

¹¹ would

¹² in no way

¹³ large hook

¹⁴ according to their plan

¹⁵ iron

¹⁶ strong

¹⁷ from the time that, when

¹⁸ against a battlement

¹⁹ tightly

²⁰ stretched

²¹ securely

²² as soon

Gaderit gud men in prevale¹;
 Thre score I trow at² thai mycht be.
 And on the fasteryn evyn³ rycht,
 In the begynnyng of the nycht,
 Till the castell thai tuk the vay.
 With blak froggis⁴ all helit⁵ thai
 The armouris at thai on thame had.
 Thai com ner by thar but abaid,⁶
 And send haly thair hors⁷ thame fra,
 And on range⁸ in ane rod⁹ can¹⁰ ga¹¹
 On handis and feit, quhen thai war neir,
 Richt as thai ky¹² and oxin weir,
 That war unbondyn left therout.
 It wes richt merk,¹³ forouten¹⁴ dout;
 The quhethir¹⁵ ane, on the wall that lay,
 Besyde him till his feir¹⁶ can say:
 'This man thinkis to mak gude chere' —
 And nemmyt¹⁷ ane husband¹⁸ tharby neir —
 'That has left all his oxyne out.'
 The tothir said, 'It is na dout;
 He sall mak merye this nycht, thouch thai¹⁹
 Be with²⁰ the Douglas led away.'
 Thai wende the Douglas and his men
 Had beyn oxyne, for thai ȝeid²¹ then
 On handis and feit, ay ane and ane.
 The Dowglas rycht gud tent²² has tane²³
 Till all thar speke,²⁴ bot alssoyn²⁵ thai
 Held, carpand,²⁶ inward on thar way.
 The Douglas men tharof wes blith,

¹ secrecy² that³ eve of the fast, Shrove
Tuesday⁴ frocks⁵ covered, concealed⁶ without delay⁷ sent all their horses away⁸ in single file⁹ along a path (road)¹⁰ did (gan)¹¹ go¹² cows¹³ dark¹⁴ without¹⁵ nevertheless¹⁶ companion (OE. *gefēra*)¹⁷ named¹⁸ husbandman, farmer¹⁹ (the cattle)²⁰ by²¹ went (OE. *ȝeide*)²² attention²³ paid (taken)²⁴ speech²⁵ very soon²⁶ talking

And till the wall thai sped thame swith¹;
 And soyn has up thair ledderis set,
 That maid a clap,² quhen the clekēt³
 Wes festnyt fast in the kymnell.
 5 That herd ane of the vachis⁴ wele,
 And buskit⁵ thiddirward but baid⁶;
 Bot Ledous, that the leddy maid,
 Sped⁷ hym to clym first to the wall;
 Bot, or he wes up gottin all,
 10 He at⁸ that vard⁹ had in keping,
 Met him rycht at the upcummyng;
 And, for¹⁰ he thought to dyng¹¹ hym doune,
 He maid na noys, na cry, na sowne,
 Bot schot¹² till him deliverly.¹³
 15 And he that wes in juperdy
 Till de,¹⁴ a lans¹⁵ till him he maid,
 And gat him be the nek but baid,
 And stekit¹⁶ him upward vith ane knyff,
 Quhill in his hand he left the liff.¹⁷
 20 And quhen he ded sa saw him ly,
 Upon the wall he went in hy,
 And doune the body kest thame till,
 And said: 'All gangis¹⁸ as we will;
 Speid¹⁹ gow upward deliverly.'
 25 And thai did swa in full gret hy.
 Bot, or thai wan²⁰ up, thar com ane,
 And saw Ledows stand him allane,
 And knew he wes nocht of thar men.
 In hy he ruschit till hym then,
 30 And hym assalgeit sturdely;
 Bot he hym slew deliverly;

¹ quickly² noise³ clicket, holdfast⁴ watches, guards⁵ hastened⁶ without delay⁷ hastened⁸ that⁹ watch¹⁰ because¹¹ throw¹² shot, dashed¹³ nimbly¹⁴ to die¹⁵ leap, dash¹⁶ stabbed¹⁷ life¹⁸ goes¹⁹ hasten²⁰ succeeded in gettin

BARBOUR, THE BRUCE

For he wes armyt and wes rycht.
 The tóthir nakyt ¹ wes, I hicht, ²
 And had nocht for till stynt no strak. ³
 Sic melle ⁴ tharup ⁵ can he mak,
 Quhill Douglas and his menghe ⁶ all
 War wonnyn up upon the wall.
 Than in the tour thai vent in hy.
 The folk that tym wes halely ⁷
 Into ⁸ the hall at thair dansyng,
 Synging, and othir wayis playing,
 As apon fastryng evyn is
 The custom, to mak joy and blis,
 To folk that ar into savite ⁹;
 Swa trowit thai that tym to be.
 Bot, or thai wist, rycht in the hall
 Douglas and his men cummyn var all,
 And cryit on hicht ¹⁰: ' Douglas! Douglas! '
 And thai, that ma ¹¹ war than he was,
 Herd 'Dowglas!' cryit rycht hydwisly, ¹²
 Thai war abasit ¹³ for the cry,
 And schupe ¹⁴ richt na defens to ma. ¹⁵
 And thai but ¹⁶ pite can thame sla,
 Till thai had gottyn the ovir ¹⁷ hand.

15

20

¹ unarmed
² assure you
³ to oppose a blow (stop a stroke)
⁴ such combat
⁵ up there
⁶ host

⁷ all of them
⁸ in
⁹ in safety
¹⁰ aloud
¹¹ more
¹² horribly

¹³ dismayed
¹⁴ attempted
¹⁵ make
¹⁶ without
¹⁷ upper

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN (A.D. 1314)

The closing incident of this selection may be compared with Scott's adaptation of it in *The Lord of the Isles* 6. 31-2. The story of the campaign, with a survey of the related events and conditions, has been told by W. M. Mackenzie, *The Battle of Bannockburn: A Study in Medieval Warfare* (Glasgow, 1913).

The battale thair so felloun¹ was,
 And sua richt gret spilling of blud,
 That on the erd the flus² it stud.
 The Scottis men so weill thame bar,
 And sua gret slauchtir maid thai thar,
 And fra so feill³ the livis revit,⁴
 That all the feild wes bludy levit.⁵
 That tym thir thre battalis⁶ wer
 All syde be syde fechtand⁷ weill neir,
 Thar mycht man her⁸ richt mony dynt,
 And vapnys⁹ apon armour stynt,¹⁰
 And se tummyll¹¹ knychtis and stedis,
 With mony rich and ryoll¹² wedis¹³
 Defoulit roydly¹⁴ under feit.
 Sum held on loft,¹⁵ sum tynt¹⁶ the suet.¹⁷
 A long quhill thus fechtand thai wer,
 That men no noyis na cry mycht her;
 Men herd nocht ellis bot granys¹⁸ and dyntis,
 That slew¹⁹ fire, as men dois²⁰ on flyntis;
 Sa²¹ faucht thai ilkane egirly
 That thai maid nouthir noyis no cry,
 Bot dang²² on othir at thar mycht,
 With wapnys that war burnyst brycht.
 The arrowis als so thik thai flaw

¹ cruel² pool³ many⁴ took away⁵ left⁶ these three battalions⁷ being fought⁸ hear⁹ weapons¹⁰ clash, smite¹¹ tumble, fall¹² royal¹³ garments¹⁴ rudely¹⁵ aloft¹⁶ lost¹⁷ life-blood (sweat)¹⁸ groans¹⁹ struck²⁰ do²¹ so²² struck

BARBOUR, THE BRUCE

That thai mycht say weill, at ¹ thaim saw,
 That thai anc hydwis schour ² can ma;
 For quhar thai fell, I wndirta,³
 Thai left eftir thame taknyng,⁴
 That sall neid, as I trow, lechyng.⁵
 The Ynglis archeris schot so fast
 That, mycht thar schot haf had last,⁶
 It had beyne hard to Scottis men. . . .

For quhen the Scottis ynkirly⁷
 Saw thair fais sa sturdely
 Stand into ⁸ battale thame agane,
 With all thar mycht and all thar mayne
 Thai layd on, as men out of wit;
 For quhar thai with full strak ⁹ mycht hit,
 Thair mycht no armyng ¹⁰ stynt thar strak;
 Thai tofruschit ¹¹ thame thai mycht ourtak,¹²
 And with axis sic duschis ¹³ gaff
 That thai helmys and hedis claff.
 And thair fais richt hardely
 Met thame, and dang ¹⁴ on douchtely ¹⁵ 20
 With wapnys that war stith ¹⁶ of steill.
 Thar wes the battell strikyn ¹⁷ weill;
 So gret dynnyng ther wes of dyntis,
 As wapnys apon armor styntis,
 And of speris so gret bristing,¹⁸ 25
 With sic thraving ¹⁹ and sic thristing,²⁰
 Sic gyrnyng,²¹ granyng,²² and so gret
 A noyis, as thai can othir bet,²³
 And cryit ensengeis ²⁴ on everilk syd,
 Gifand and takand woundis wyd, 30

¹ that
² shower
³ assert
⁴ token
⁵ healing
⁶ lasted
⁷ in particular, for their part
⁸ in

⁹ stroke
¹⁰ armor
¹¹ crushed
¹² overtake
¹³ severe blows
¹⁴ struck
¹⁵ valiantly
¹⁶ strong

¹⁷ engaged
¹⁸ breaking, bursting
¹⁹ throwing
²⁰ thrusting
²¹ grinning
²² groaning
²³ beat
²⁴ war-cries

That it wes hydwiss for till her
 All four the battelis,¹ wicht that wer,
 Fechtand intill a front haly.²
 Almychty God ! full douchtely
 Schir Edward the Brys and his men
 Among thair fais³ contenyt thame⁴ then. . .

For all the Scottis men that war thar,
 Quhen thai saw thame⁵ eschew the ficht,
 Dang on thame swa with all thar mycht
 That thai scalit⁶ in tropellis⁷ ser,⁸
 And till discumfitur war ner ;
 And sum of thame fled all planly.⁹
 Bot thai that wicht war and hardy,
 That schame letit¹⁰ till ta¹¹ the flicht,
 At gret myschef mantenynt¹² the ficht,
 And stithly in the stour¹³ can stand.
 And quhen the king of Ingland
 Saw his men fle in syndry¹⁴ place,
 And saw his fais rout,¹⁵ that was
 Worthyn¹⁶ so wicht and so hardy,
 That all his folk war halely¹⁷
 Swa stonayit¹⁸ that thai had no mycht
 To stynt¹⁹ thair fais in the ficht,
 He was abasit²⁰ so gretumly²¹
 That he and all his cumpany,
 Fif hundreth armyt weill at rycht,
 Intill a frusche²² all tuk the flycht,
 And till the castell held ther way.
 And zeit, as I herd sum men say,
 That of Wallanch Schir Amer,²³

¹ battalions² abreast, all in one rank (?)³ foes⁴ demeaned themselves⁵ the English⁶ dispersed⁷ small companies⁸ separate⁹ openly¹⁰ prevented¹¹ from taking¹² maintained¹³ combat, battle¹⁴ sundry¹⁵ host¹⁶ become¹⁷ entirely¹⁸ astonished, dismayed¹⁹ stop, check²⁰ cast down, discouraged²¹ greatly, extremely²² rush, sudden breaking of ranks²³ Sir Aymer de Valence

Quhen he the feld saw vancust¹ ner,
 By the renge² led away the king,
 Agane his will, fra the fichting.
 And quhen Schir Gelis de Argente³
 Saw the king thus, and his menge,
 Schape thame⁴ to fle so spedely,
 He com richt to the kyng in hy,
 And said: 'Schir, sen that it is swa
 That ge thusgat⁵ your gat⁶ will ga,
 Haffis⁷ gud day! for agane⁸ will I;
 Scheit fled I nevir sekirly:
 And I cheis heir to byde and de,
 Than till lif heir and schamfully fle.⁹
 His brydill than but mair abaid⁹
 He turnyt, and agane he raid,
 And on Schir Eduard the Brysis¹⁰ rout
 That wes so sturdy and so stout,
 As dreid of na kyn thing¹¹ had he,
 He prikit,¹² cryand 'Argente I'
 And thai with speris swa him met,
 And swa feill speris on hym set,
 That he and hors war chargit¹³ swa
 That bath doune to the erd can ga;
 And in that place than slayne wes he.
 Of his ded wes rycht gret pite;
 He wes the thrid best knycht, perfay,
 That men wist liffand in his day;
 He did mony a fair journe.¹⁴

¹ vanquished² rein³ Giles de Argentine⁴ prepare themselves⁵ thus⁶ way⁷ have⁸ (turn) back again⁹ without more delay¹⁰ Bruce's¹¹ no sort of thing¹² rode hard¹³ pressed hard¹⁴ day's fighting

26. thrid: the other two named by Lord Hailes (*Ann. Scot.* 2. 48) are the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg and Robert Bruce.

STORIES OF TRAVEL

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE

The work which passes under the name of Sir John Mandeville was probably the production of a certain Jean de Bourgogne, called the Bearded, who died at Liège on November 17, 1372. According to the chronicle composed by Jean d'Outremeuse (1338-1399), this Jean de Bourgogne styled himself in his will Jean de Mandeville, and revealed on his deathbed to the chronicler that, having had the misfortune to kill an earl in his own country, England, he had bound himself to traverse three parts of the world. His tomb was to be seen at Liège in 1798, with an inscription which ran (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 36. 26): 'Hic jacet vir nobilis Dom. Joannes de Mandeville, alias dictus ad Barbam, Miles, Dominus d'Campdi, natus de Anglia, medicinæ professor, devotissimus orator, et bonorum suorum largissimus pauperibus erogator, qui, toto quasi orbe lustrato, Leodiæ vitam suam clausit extremum, A.D. MCCCLXXII, mensis Nov. die XVII.' Whatever traveling Mandeville (or Bourgogne) may have done, almost his whole work is a tissue of borrowings and adaptations from such writings as William of Boldensele's *Itinerary* (published 1336), Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerary* (1330), Hetoun the Armenian's *History of the Orient* (1327), the so-called *Epistle of Prester John*, etc. The work was first written in French, and afterwards translated into English, Latin, and a variety of other languages. Dr. Warner says (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 36. 28): 'Avowedly written for the unlearned, and combining interest of matter and a quaint simplicity of style, the book hit the popular taste. . . . No mediæval work was more widely diffused in the vernacular.' Some three hundred manuscripts are said to be in existence. There are three English versions, of which two, both contained in manuscripts of 1410-1420, are superior to the other. One of these (in Cotton MS. Titus 6. 16) is the text generally found in print; the other, in Northern dialect (in Egerton MS. 1982), was published by G. F. Warner in 1889, with an excellent introduction and notes, and is that from which our extracts are taken. For fuller account see *Encyc. Brit.* and *Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v.; *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 90-100.

THE REBIRTH OF THE PHOENIX

Text, p. 25. In order to show the relation of the English translation to the original, a passage of the French text printed by Dr. Warner is here reproduced; but it must be understood that this undoubtedly differs from the present on which the present English version is based:

En Egipte est la cite de Eliopole, cest a dire la cite de solail. En celle y ad un temple fait reonde, a la guise de temple de Jerusalem. Luy preistres de ceo temple ac

par escript la date del oysel qad a noun Fenix, qi nest qe un soul en monde, et se vient la arder sur laulter de ceo temple au chief de v^e ans, qar tant vit il. Ly preistres appa-
 raille et met sur cel aulter espices, et soufre vif, et autres choses qi legerement enflau-
 ment, si qe ly oisel se vient ardoir tot en cendres. Et le primer iour apres lem troeve
 as cendres un verm; et le secund iour lem trove loisel tot parfait; et le tiercz iour il
 sen vole. Et ensi ni ad tot dys qe un oisel soul de celle nature; et vrayment ceo est grant
 miracle de Dieu. Et puet homme comparer cel oisel a Dieu, en ceo qe ni ad Dieu fors qe
 un soul, et en ceo qe nostre Seignur resuscita le tiercz iour. Cest oisel veit homme souent
 voler en celles parties. Et nest gairs pluis grant dun aigle; et il ad un crest sur la teste
 pluis grant qe un paon, et ad col tout iaune de la colour dun oriel bien lusant, et le dos
 de ynde, et les aeles de purple colour, et la cove reget de travers de iaune et de rouge.
 Et est tres belle a veoir au solail, qar il tresluyt mult noblement.

In Egipte also es a citee pat es called Eliople,¹ pat es als mykill at
 say² as pe citee of pe sonne. In pis citee es a temple, round in pe
 maner of pe temple of Jerusalem. pe preste of pe temple has writen
 in a buke pe date of a fewle³ pat men calles Fenix; and per es bot
 ane in all pe werld. And pis fewle liffes fyve hundreth gere; and at
 pe fyve hundreth gere⁴ end he commes to pe forsaide temple, and
 apon pe awter he brynnes himself all to powder. And pe preste of
 pe temple, pat knawes by his buke pe tyme of his commyng, makes
 pe awter redy, and lays perapon diverse spicerie⁵ and sulphure vive,⁶
 and stikkes of pe junipre tree, and oþer thinges pat will sone brynne.
 And þan the fewle commes, and lightes apon pe awter, and fannez
 with his wenges ay till pe forsaide thinges be sett on fire; and þare he
 brynnes himself all till asches. On pe morue⁷ þai fynd in pe asches as
 it ware a worme; on pe secund day pat worme es turned till a fewle
 perfutely fourmed; and on pe thridde day it flies fra pat place to pe
 place whare it was wont to dwell. And so per es nevermare bot ane.
 þis ilke fewle betakens oure Lord Jesu Criste, in als mykill as per
 es bot a⁸ Godd, pat rase on pe thridde day fra deed to lyfe. þis for-
 saide fewle es oft tymes sene ayrand⁹ aboute, when pe weder es faire
 and clere; and þai say þare pat when þai see pat fewle sore in pe aer,
 þai sall afterward hafe gude geres and miry, for þai say it es a fewle
 of heven. And þis fewle es na mare þan ane egle of body. He has
 on his heved a creste as a pacok, bot it es mykill mare þan pe creste

¹ Heliopolis, a short distance
 from Cairo

² as much as to say

³ bird

⁴ year's

⁵ spicy substances

⁶ sulphur vivum, horse
 brimstone

⁷ morrow

⁸ one

⁹ moving in the air

of a pacock. His nekke es galow, and his back es ynde¹ colour; his wenges er reed, and his taile es barred overthwert² with grene and galowe and reed. And in þe sonne he semes wonder faire, for þir³ er þe colours þat er fairest schewand.⁴

THE PARADISE OF THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

Text, pp. 137-8. Almost any encyclopædia, and the larger dictionaries under the word 'Assassin,' will give some information on the matter of this section. The Assassins were so called because they were intoxicated with hashish (see the 'maner of drinke' below). Mandeville draws from Odoric (Yule, *Cathay* i. 153-5) or Marco Polo (Book i, chap. 22); see Yule's notes to both. The 'old man,' or sheikh, derived his title from the mountainous region south of the Caspian which was under his sway. In particular, he had a mountain castle at Alamūt in the Elburz range, some ninety miles northwest of Teheran, and just south of a line joining Teheran and Rasht. The rise of this power may be assigned to 1090, or thereabouts, and the destruction of the castles where the sheikhs held sway to about 1256.

5 Besyde þe ile of Pentoxore, þe whilk es Prestre Johnez, es anoþer ile bathe lang and brade, þe whilk es called Mulstorak⁵; and it es under þe lordschepe of Prestre John. In þis ile es grete plentee of al maner of gudes and ricchess. And in þat land was sum tyme a riche man þat was called Catolonabes, and he was a grete man and a won-
10 der wyly. And he had a faire castell and a strang, standand upon a hill, and he gert⁶ make aboute it strang wallez and hie. And within þase wallez he gert make a faire gardyn, and plant þerin all maner of treez berand diverse fruytz. He gert plant þerin also all maner of erbez of gude smell, and þat bare faire floures. Þare ware also in þa
15 gardyne many faire welles, and besyde þaim ware many faire halles and chaumbres, paynted with gold and azure wele and curiously with diverse storys, and with diverse maners of briddes, þe whilk semed as þai sang and turned by engyne,⁷ as þai had bene all quikke.⁸ He putte also in þat gardyne all maner of fewles þat he myght get, and
20 all maner of bestez þat he myght fynd, to make a man solace and disporte. And he putte also into þat gardyne faire damysellz within þe

¹ blue (indigo)

² crosswise

³ there

⁴ showing (i.e. to look upon)

⁵ Melazgerd, in Armenia, north

⁶ caused to

⁷ mechanism

assailed þis castell, and slew Catolonabes, and destruyd all his ricchess and faire thinges þat ware in his Paradys, and kest doune his castell; and ȝit er þe welles þare, and sum other thinges, bot na ricchess. It es nogt lang sen it was destruyd.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Text, p. 84. Mandeville is here indebted to the so-called *Letter of Prester John*, extant before 1177. The Latin runs (Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes*, in *Abh. Phil.-Hist. Classe der Königl.-Sächs. Ges. der Wiss.*, Vol. 7, Leipzig, 1879, pp. 912-3): 'Quod nemus situm est ad radicem montis Olympi, unde fons perspicuus oritur, omnium in se specierum saporem retinens. Variatur autem sapor per singulas horas diei et noctis, et progreditur itinere dierum trium non longe a Paradyso, unde Adam fuit expulsus. Si quis de fonte illo ter jejunos gustaverit, nullam ex illa die infirmitatem patietur, semperque erit quasi in ætate XXX duorum annorum, quamdiu vixerit.' The European notions of the Fountain of Youth all go back to this, according to E. W. Hopkins ('The Fountain of Youth,' in *Jour. Am. Or. Soc.* 26 (1905). 32 ff.).

5 At þe heved of þis ilk forest es þe citee of Polombe; and besyde þat citee es a mountayne wharoff þe citee takez þe name, for men callez þe mountayne Polombe. And at þe fote of þis mountayne es a well, noble and faire; and þe water þeroff has a swete savour and reflaire,¹ as it ware of diverse maner of spicery. And ilke houre of þe
10 day þe water chaungez diversely his savour and his smell. And wha so drinkes fastand thryes of þat well, he sall be hale of what maner of malady þat he hase. And forþi² þa³ þat wonnez⁴ nere þat well drynkez þeroff þe offer, and þerfore þai hafe nevermare sekeness, bot evermare þai seme ȝung. I, John Maundevill, sawe þis well, and
15 drank þeroff thrys and all my felawes, and evermare sen þat tyme I fele me þe better and þe haler, and suppose⁵ for to do till þe tyme þat Godd of his grace will make me to passe oute of þis dedly lyf. Sum men callez þat well *Fons Juventutis*, þat es for to say, þe well of ȝowthe-hede⁶; for þai þat drinkez þeroff semez allway ȝung. And þai say þis

¹ odor² therefore³ those⁴ dwell⁵ MS. supposez⁶ youth

5. Polombe: Quilon, or Quillon, not far from Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of India, on the west coast (Yule, *Cathay* 12. 71).

well commez fra Paradys terrestre,¹ for it es so vertuous. Thurghoute all þis cuntree þer growes þe best gynger þat es ower whare²; and marchaunds commez þider fra ferre cuntreez for to bye it.

ST. THOMAS AND INDIAN IDOLATRY

Text, pp. 86-7. From Odoric, chaps. 18, 19 (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 80-83).

Fra þis land men gase by many diverse placez to a cuntree þat es called Mabaron³; and it es fra þe forsaid land x day-journez. And it es a grete rewme⁴ and a large, and many gude citeez and tounes þerin. In þat land of Mabaron liez Sayne Thomas þe apostle, and his body all hale, in a faire tounge in þe citee of Calamy⁵; for þare was he martird and graven.⁶ Bot afterwardes þe Assirienes tuke his body, and bare it to a citee in Mesopotamy þat es called Edisse.⁷ Bot eft-sones⁸ it was translated agayne to þe foresaid citee, and layd in þe forsaid tounge; and his arme with his hand þat he putt in oure Lordes syde after his resurreccioun, when he said, *Noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis*,⁹ lyez withouten in a vessell. And by that hand men of þat cuntree giffez þaire jugementz, to wit wha has rigt. For if any stryf be betwene twa parties, and ayther party affermez þat he has rigt in his cause, þan þai ger write in a scrowe¹⁰ þe rigt of ayther party, and puttez þase billes in þe hand of Sayne¹¹ Thomas; and als fast¹² þe hand castez oute þe bille þat contenez þe fals cause, and þe toþer it haldez still. And þerfore men commez ofttymes oute of ferre cuntreez þider, for to declare a rigtwys cause betwene party and party, þe whilk es in doute. Þe kirke whare Sayne Thomas lyes es mykill and faire, and full of ymagery of þaire mawmets¹³; and þase ymagez er ilk ane of þe stature of twa men at þe leste.

Bot þare es ane þat passez all oþer of stature; and þat es richely and really¹⁴ enourned¹⁵ with gold and precious stanes all aboute, and sittez

¹ earthly

² anywhere where (redundant phrase)

³ the Coromandel coast of southern India (Yule, *Cathay* 1. 80)

⁴ realm

⁵ St. Thomas, a few miles south of Madras

⁶ buried

⁷ Edessa, or Urfa, in Syria

⁸ afterwards

⁹ John 20. 27

¹⁰ scroll

¹¹ saint

¹² as fast as might be, very fast

¹³ false gods, idols (*lit.* Mahomets)

¹⁴ royally

¹⁵ adorned

in a chaier nobelly arraied. And he has aboute his nekk as it ware
 brade gyrdils¹ of silke, wele hernayst² with gold and preciouise stanes.
 To þat ymage men commez fra ferre in pilgrimage with grete devo-
 cioun, als comounly als Cristen men commez to Sayne James.³ And
 5 sum of þam, for þe grete devocioun þai hafe to þat mawmet, ay as þai
 ga, er lukand douneward to þe erthe, and will noȝt luke aboute þam,
 for þai schuld see nathing þat schuld lette þaire devocioun. Þare
 commez sum also þider in pilgrimage þat beres scharpe knyfes in þaire
 handes, with whilk, ay as þai ga by þe way, þai wound þaimself in þe
 10 legges and þe armes, and in oþer placez of þaire body, þat þe blude
 rynnez doune fra þer woundes in grete fuysoun.⁴ And þis þai do for
 lufe of þat ydole, and saise þat he es full blissed þat will dye for þe
 lufe of his mawmet. And sum of þam bringez with þam þaire childer,
 and slaez þaim and makes sacrifice of þam to þaire mawmet; and þai
 15 take þe blude of þaire childer, and sprenklez it apon þe ymage. Sum,
 also, fra⁵ þai passe oute of þer housez til þai comme before þaire maw-
 met, at ilke a thridd passe knelis doune apon þe erthe with grete de-
 vociou. And þai bring with þam incense and oþer thinges swete
 smelland, for to turify⁶ þat ymage, as we do here to Goddes body.
 20 And þare es before þat ymage, as it ware, a poonde⁷ or a vyver,⁸ full
 of water; and into þat pilgrimes castez gold and silver and precious
 stanes withouten noumer, instead of offerand. And forþi þe mynis-
 ters þat kepez þat ilk mawmet, when þai hafe mister⁹ of any monee
 for reparailng of þaire kirk, or for any oþer thing þat fallez to þat
 25 ilke mawmet, þai ga to þat ilke poonde, and takez oute þeroff als
 mykill as þam nede. And ȝe schall understand þat, when grete festez
 commez of þat mawmet, as þe dedicacioun of þe kirk or þe tronyng¹⁰
 of þat mawmet, all þe cuntree assemblez þider; and þai sett þis maw-
 met with grete wirschepe in a chariot, wele arraied with clathez of gold
 30 and of silke, and ledez him with grete sollempnitee aboute þe citee.
 And before þe chariot gase first in processiou all þe maydens of þe
 cuntree, twa and twa togyder; and þan all þe pilgrymmes þat commez
 þider fra ferre cuntreez, of whilke sum for þe grete devocioun þai

¹ a broad girdle² ornamented³ Saint James of Compostella⁴ abundance, profusion⁵ from the time when⁶ incense⁷ pond⁸ aquarium (*vivarium*)⁹ need¹⁰ thronging

hafe to þat mawmet fallez doune before þe chariot, and latez it gang
 over þam. And so er sum of þam slayne, sum þaire armes and sum
 þaire schankes broken; and þai trowe þat, þe mare payne þai suffer
 here for lufe of þaire mawmet, þe mare joy in þe toþer world sall þai
 hafe, and þe nerre þaire godd sall þai be. And sikerly þai suffer so
 mykill payne and martirdom apon þaire bodys for þe lufe of þat ilke
 mawmet, þat unnethes¹ will any Cristen man suffer half so mykill,
 ne þe tende² parte, for þe lufe of ourc Lorde Jesu Criste.

THE SULTAN OF EGYPT

Text, pp. 20-1

þe sowdan³ has three wyfes, of þe whilke ane sall be a Cristen
 womman, and þe oþer twa Sarezenes. And ane of þir wyfes sall dwell
 in Jerusalem, anoþer at Damasc, and þe thridd at Ascalon.⁴ And, ay
 when him list, he gase to visit þam, and umqwhyle⁵ ledes þam aboute
 with him. Noght forþi⁶ he has lemmanes, als many as him list have;
 for, when he comes till any citee or toune, he gers bring before him
 all þe nobilest and þe fairest maydens of þe cuntree nere aboute, and
 he gers þam be keped honestly and wirschipfully. And, when he will
 hafe any of þam, he gers þaim all be broght before him, and wha so
 es maste lykand till him, he sendes till hir or takes þe ryng off his
 fynger, and castez till hir. And þan sall scho be tane,⁷ and waschen
 and bawmed⁸ and wirschipfully cledd, and after souper be broght till
 his chaumbre. And þus he duse ay when he will. Before þe sowdan
 sall na straunger com þat he ne sall be cledd in clathe of gold or tars⁹
 or in chamelet,¹⁰ a maner of clething whilk þe Sarzenes usez. And als
 sone as he has sight of þe sowdan, be it at wyndow or elleswhare,
 him behoves knele doune and kisse þe erthe; for swilk es þe maner
 þare to do reverence to þe sowdan, when any man will speke with
 him. And when any straungers commes till him in message¹¹ oute of
 ferre landes, his men sall stand aboute him with drawen swerdes in
 handes, and þer handes up on loft,¹² to stryke þam doune, if þai speke

¹ scarcely, with difficulty² tenth³ sultan⁴ West of Jerusalem, on the coast⁵ from time to time⁶ none the less⁷ taken⁸ anointed⁹ a rich Oriental stuff¹⁰ damasked silk¹¹ on an embassy¹² aloft

any thing þat displesez þe sowdan. þare sall na straunger com before him for to ask him any thing þat ne his asked sall be graunted him, if it be resounable and noȝt agayne þaire lawe. And riȝt so duse all oþer princez and lordes in þat cuntree; for þai say þat na man suld
5 com before a prince þat he ne schuld passe gladder away þan he come þiderward.

THE EARTH IS ROUND

Text, pp. 90-2

And ȝe schall understand þat in þis land, and in many oþer þare aboute, men may noȝt see þe sterne¹ þat es called *Polus Arcticus*, whilk standes even north and stirrez never, by whilk schippemen er
10 ledd, for it es noȝt sene in þe south. Bot þer es an oþer sterne, whilke es called antartic, and þat es even agayne² þe toþer sterne; and by þat sterne er schippemen ledd þare, as schippemen er ledd here by *Polus Arcticus*. And, riȝt as þat sterne may noȝt be sene here, on þe same wyse þis sterne may noȝt be sene þare. And þareby may men
15 see wele þat þe werld es all rounde; for parties³ of þe firmament whilk may be sene in sum cuntree may noȝt be sene in an oþer. And þat may men prove þus. For, if a man myȝht fynd redy schipping and gude company, and þerto had his hele,⁴ and wald ga to see þe werld, he myȝht ga all aboute þe werld, bathe aboven and benethe.
20 And þat prufe I þus, after⁵ þat I hafe sene. For I hafe bene in Braban,⁶ and sene by þe astrolaby⁷ þat þe pole artyc es þare liii degrez hegh, and in Almayne⁸ towardes Boem⁹ it has lviii degrez, and forþermare¹⁰ toward þe north it has lxii degrez of height and sum mynutes. All þis I persayved by þe astrolaby. And ȝe schall under-
25 stand þat in þe south, even ynentes¹¹ þis sterne, es þe sterne þat es called pole antartic. Þise twa sternes stirrez never mare; and aboute þaim movez þe firmament, as a qwhele¹² duse aboute ane axeltree. And so þe lyne þat es betwene þise twa sternes departez¹³ all þe firmament in twa partes, ayther ylike mykill.¹⁴ Afterwardes I went toward

¹ star

² exactly opposite to

³ parts

⁴ health

⁵ according to

⁶ Brabant

⁷ astrolabe

⁸ Germany

⁹ Bohemia

¹⁰ further

¹¹ exactly opposite

¹² wheel

¹³ separates

¹⁴ much alike

þe south, and I fand þat in Liby¹ seez men first þe sterne antartyke; and, as I went ferrer, I fand þat in hie Liby it hase in height xviii degreez and sum mynutes, of whilke mynutes lx makez a degre. And so, passand by land and by see toward þe cuntree þat I spakk off are,² and oþer landes and iles þat er begond, I fand þat þis sterne antartik had in height xxxiii degreez. And, if I had had cumpany and schipping þat wald hafe gane ferrer, I trow forsothe þat we schuld hafe sene all þe roundeness of þe firmament, þat es to say bathe þe emisperies,³ þe uppermare and þe nedermare.⁴ For, as I sayd zow before, halfe þe firmament es betwene þise twa sternes; þe whilk I hafe sene. . . . And þerfore I say sikerly þat a man myght go all þe werld aboute, bathe aboven and bynethe, and comme agayne to his awen cuntree, so þat he had his hele, gude schipping, and gude company, as I said before. And all way he schuld fynd men, landes, and iles and citeez and townes, as er in þir cuntrees. For ze wate wele þat þase men þat dwellez even under þe pole antartyk er fote agayne fote to þase þat dwellez even under þe pole artyke, als wele as we and þase men þat dwellez agaynes us er fote agayne fote; and rízt so it es of oþer parties of þe werld. For ilke a party of þe erthe and of þe see hase his contrary of thinges, whilk er even⁵ agaynes him. And ze schall understand þat, as I conjecture, þe land of Prestre John, Emperour of Inde, es even under us. For, if a man schall ga fra Scotland or Ingland unto Jerusalem, he sall ga all way upward. For oure land es þe lawest⁶ party of þe west, and þe land of Prestre John es in þe lawest party of þe este. And þai hafe day when we hafe nyght, and nyght when we hafe day. And, als mykill as a man ascendes upward oute of oure cuntreez to Jerusalem, als mykill schall he go dounward to þe land of Prestre John; and þe cause es for þe erthe and þe see er rounde. For it es þe comoun worde þat Jerusalem es in myddes of þe erthe; and þat may wele be proved þus. For, and a man þare take a spere and sett it even in þe erthe at midday, when þe day and þe nyght er bathe ylyke lang, it makez na schadowe till na party.⁷ And David also beres witnes þeroff, þare he saise: *Deus autem*

¹ Libya² before³ hemispheres⁴ nether⁵ just, exactly⁶ lowest⁷ direction

*... ratus est salutem in medio terre,*¹ þat es to say
 ... e þe begynnynge of þe world wrought hele i
 ... And þerfore þai þat gase oute of oure cuntree
 ... to Jerusalem, als many journez² as þai make to g
 ... þai make to ga in to þe land c
 Prestre John downward fra Jerusalem. And so he may ga into þas
 iles enviroound all þe roundness of þe erthe and of þe see, till h
 com even under us. And þerfore I hafe ofttymes thocht on a tale þe
 I herd, when I was gung, how a worthy man of oure cuntree wer
 10 on a tyme for to see þe world; and he passed Inde³ and many ile
 bygonde Inde, whare er ma þan v^m⁴ iles, and he went so lang by lan
 and by see, enviroound þe world, þat he fand ane ile whare he her
 men speke his awen langage. For he herd ane⁵ dryfe bestez, sayan
 to þam swilke wordes as he herd men say til oxen in his awen cur
 15 tree gangand at þe plugh; of whilk he had grete mervaille, for he wis
 nogt how it myght be. Bot I suppose he had so lang went⁶ on lan
 and on see, enviroound þe world, þat he was commen in to his awe
 marchez⁷; and, if he had passed forþermare, he schuld hafe comme
 even to his awen cuntree. Bot for he herd þat mervaille, and mygt
 20 get schipping na ferrere, he turned agayne as he come; and so h
 had a grete travaile. And it befell efterward þat he went into No
 way; and a tempest of wynd in þe see drafe him, so þat he arryve
 in ane ile. And, when he was þare, he wist wele it was þe ile in whil
 he had bene before and herd his awen speche, as men drafe bestē
 25 And þat myght wele be; þof all⁸ it be þat symple men of cunnyn
 trowe nogt þat men may ga under þe erthe bot-if⁹ þai fall unto
 firmament. For as us think¹⁰ þat þase men er under us, so think þai
 þat we er under þaim.

¹ Ps. 74. 12² day's journeys³ India⁴ five thousand⁵ one, a man⁶ traveled⁷ borders⁸ even though⁹ unless¹⁰ it seems to u

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

Text, pp. 149-50. To afford an opportunity of comparison with the current Southern text, the beginning of this section is here transcribed from Halliwell's reprint (London, 1839, p. 303), with changes in capitalization: 'And begonde the lond and the yles and the deserttes of Presure Johnes lordschipe, in goyngre streyght toward the est. men fynde nothing but moutaynes and roches fulle grete: and there is the derke regyoun, where no man may see, nouthre be day ne be nyght, as thei of the contree seyn. And that desert and that place of derknesse duren fro this cost unto Paradys Terrestre, where that Adam, oure foremost fader, and Eve weren putt, that dwelleden there but lytylle while; and that is towards the est, at the begynnyng of the erthe.'

For the subject in general, see Coli, *Il Paradiso Terrestre Dantesco*, Florence, 1897.

Bezond pir ilez þat I hafe talde zow off, and þe desertez of þe lord-
schepe of Prestre John, to ga even ¹ est, es na land inhabited, as I said
before, bot wastez and wildernesses, and grete rochez and moun-
taynes, and a myrk ² land, whare na man may see, nyght ne day, as
men of þas cuntreez talde us. And þat mirk land and þase desertez 5
laste rigt to Paradyse terrestre, wharein Adam and Eve ware putte;
bot þai ware þare bot a lytill while. And þat place es toward þe este, at
þe begynnyng of þe erthe. Bot þat es nogt oure este, whare þe sonne
risez till us; for when þe sonne risez in þase cuntreez, þan es it mid-
nyght in our cuntree, because of þe roundness of þe erthe. For, as I 10
said before, Godd made þe erthe all rounde, in myddez of þe firma-
ment. Bot þe hillez and þe valays þat er now on þe erthe er nogt bot
of Noe flude, thurgh þe whilk þe tendre erthe was removed fra his
place, and þare become a valay, and þe hard erthe habade ³ still, and
þare er now hilles. 15

Off Paradys can I nogt speke properly, for I hafe nogt bene þare;
and þat forthinkez ⁴ me. Bot als mykill as I hafe herd of wyse men,
and men of credence, of þase cuntreez, I will tell zow. Paradys ter-
restre, as men saise, es þe hiest land of þe werld; and it es so hye
þat it touchez nere to þe cercle of þe moone. For it es so hye þat 20
Noe ⁵ flode myght nogt com þerto, whilk flude coverd all þe erthe bot
it. Paradys es closed all aboute with a wall; bot whareoff þe wall es

¹ directly
² dark, gloomy

³ abode
⁴ that I regret

⁵ Noah's

made, can na man tell. It es all mosse-begrowen, and coverd so with mosse and with bruschez þat men may see na stane, ne nogt elles wharoff a wall schuld be made. Þe walle of Paradys strechez fra þe south toward þe north; and þer es nane entree open into it, because
 5 of fire evermare brynnand, þe whilk es called þe flawmand swerde¹ þat Godd ordaynd þare before þe entree, for na man schuld entre.

In þe middes of Paradys es a well, out of þe whilke þer commez foure flodez,² þat rynnez thurgh diverse landez. Þir³ flodez sinkez doun into þe erthe within Paradyse, and rynnez so under þe erthe many
 10 myle, and afterwardes comme þai up agayne oute of þe erthe in ferre cuntreez.

SIR JOHN'S MODESTY

Text, pp. 155-6

Þare er many oþer cuntreez and oþer mervailles whilk I hafe nogt sene, and þerfore I can nogt speke properly of þam; and also in cuntreez whare I hafe bene er many mervailles of whilk I speke nogt, for
 15 ware owere⁴ lang to tell. And also I will tell na mare of mervailles þat er þare, so þat oþer men þat wendez þider may fynd many new thinges to speke off, whilk I hafe nogt spoken off. For many men hase grete lykyng and desyre for to here new thinges; and þerfore will I now ceesse of tellyng of diverse thingez þat I sawe in þase cuntreez, so þat
 20 þase þat covetez to visit þase cuntreez may fynd new thinges ynewe to tell off, for solace and recreacioun of þaim þat lykez to here þam.

And I, JOHN MAWNDEVILL, knyght, þat went oute of my cuntree and passed þe see, þe gere of oure Lord Jesu Criste MCCCXXXII and hase passed thurgh many landes, cuntreez, and iles, and hase bene
 25 at many wirschipfull journeez⁵ and dedez of armez with worthy men — if all⁶ I be unworþi — and now am comen to rest, as man discomfitt for age and travaile and febilness of body, þat constraynez me þarto, and for oþer certayne causez, I hafe compiled þis buke and writen it, as it coome to my mynde, in þe gere of oure Lord Jesu
 30 Criste MCCCLXVI, þat es for to say, in þe foure and thrittyde gere efter þat I departed oute of þis land, and tuke my way þiderward.

¹ Gen. 3. 24

² Gen. 2. 10 ff.

³ these

⁴ too

⁵ days of battle

⁶ even if

And for als mykill as many men trowez noȝt bot þat at¹ þai see with þaire eghen, or þat þai may consayve with þaire awen kyndely² wittes, þerfore I made my way in my commyng hamward unto Rome, to schew my buke till oure Haly Fader þe Pape. And I tald him þe mervailles whilk I had sene in diverse cuntreez, so þat he, with his wyse counsaile, wald examyne it with diverse folke þat er in Rome— for þare er evermare dwelland men of all naciouns of þe werld. And a lytill after, when he and his wyse counsaile had examynde it all thurgh, he said to me for certayne þat all was soth þat was þerin. For he said þat he had a buke of Latyn þat conteyned all þat and mykill mare, after whilk buke the *Mappa Mundi* es made; and þat buke he schewed me. And þerfore oure Haly Fader þe Pape hase ratified and confermed my buke in all poyntes.

Qwherfore I pray til all þase þat redez þis buke, or heres it redd, þat þai will pray for me, and I schall pray for þaim. And all þase þat saise for me devoutely a Pater Noster and ane Ave, þat Godd forgife me my synnez, he graunt þam parte of all my pilgrimage, and all oþer gude dedis þat I hafe done, or may do in tyme commyng unto my lyfez end. And I, in þat in me es, makez þam parcerenes³ of me,⁴ prayand to Godd, of wham all grace commez, þat he fulfill with his grace all þase þat þis buke redez or heres, and save þam and kepe þam in body and saule, and after þis lyf bring þam to þe cuntree whare joy es, and endles rest, and peesse withouten end. Amen.

A PILGRIMAGE BY SEA TO COMPOSTELLA

The manuscript containing this poem has been ascribed to the time of Henry VI (1422–1471). It is here printed from Furnivall's edition of *The Stacions of Rome* (E.E.T.S. No. 25).

Men may leve alle gamys⁵
That saylen to Seynt Jamys,⁶
Ffor many a man hit gramys,⁷
When they begyn to sayle;

25

¹ that
² natural, native
³ sharers, partners

⁴ MS. þam
⁵ put aside all mirth

⁶ Santiago de Compostella, in the province of Galicia, in northwestern Spain
⁷ distresses

Ffor when they have take the see
 At Sandwyche¹ or at Wynchylsee,²
 At Bystow,³ or where that hit bee,
 Theyr hertes begyn to fayle.

5 Anone the mastyr commaundeih fast
 To hys shypmen, in alle the hast,⁴
 To dresse⁵ hem sone about the mast,
 Theyr takelyng to make;
 With 'Howe! hissa!' then they cry;
 10 'What, howe! mate, thow stondyst to⁶ ny,
 Thy felow may nat hale⁷ the⁸ by';
 Thus they begyn to crake.⁹

A boy or tweyn anone upstyeu,¹⁰
 And overthwart the sayle-yerde lyen.
 15 'Y how! taylia!' the remenaunt cryen,
 And pulle with alle theyr myght.
 'Bestowe¹¹ the boote,¹² boteswayne, anon,
 That our pylgryms may pley theron;
 For som ar lyke to cowgh and grone
 20 Or¹³ hit be full mydnyght.'

'Hale the bowelyne¹⁴! now, vere the shete! —
 Cooke, make redy anoon our mete!'
 'Our pylgryms have no lust to ete,
 I pray God yeve hem rest.'
 25 'Go to the helm! what, howe! no nere¹⁵!' —
 'Steward, felow, a pot of bere!'
 'Ye shalle have, sir, with good chere,
 Anon alle of the best.'

¹ north of Dover² southwest of Dover, in Sussex³ Bristol⁴ all haste⁵ make ready⁶ too⁷ haul⁸ thee⁹ call aloud¹⁰ climb¹¹ stow¹² boat¹³ ere¹⁴ a rope made fast to the middle part of the outside of a sail¹⁵ nearer (no closer to the wind?)

'Y howe! trussa! hale in the brayles¹!
 'Thow halyst nat, be God, thow fayles!'—
 'O se howe welle owre good shyp sayles!'

And thus they say among.

'Hale in the wartake²!' 'Hit shal be done.'—
 'Steward, cover the boorde anone,
 And set bred and salt therone,
 And tary nat to long!'

5

Then cometh oone and seyth: 'Be mery,
 Ye shall have a storme or a pery.'³
 'Holde thow thy pese! thow canst no whery,⁴
 Thow medlyst wondyr sore.'
 Thys menewhyle⁵ the pylgryms ly,
 And have theyr bowlys fast theym by,
 And cry aftyr hote malvesy⁶:
 'Thow helpe for to restore.'

10

15

And som wold have a saltyd tost,⁷
 Ffor they myght ete neyther sode⁸ ne rost;
 A man myght sone pay for theyr cost,
 As for oo day or twayne.
 Som layde theyr bookys on theyr kne,
 And rad⁹ so long they myght nat se.
 'Allas, myne hede wolle cleve on thre!'
 Thus seyth another certayne.

20

Then commeth owre owner, lyke a lorde,
 And speketh many a royall worde,
 And dresseth hym to the hygh borde,
 To see alle thyng be welle.
 Anone he calleth a carpentere,
 And byddyth hym bryng with hym hys gere,¹⁰

25

30

¹ small ropes fastened to the
 edges of sails

² (?)

³ squall

⁴ (?)

⁵ in the meantime

⁶ malmsey

⁷ toast

⁸ anything boiled

⁹ read

¹⁰ tools

STORIES OF TRAVEL

To make the cabans here and there,
With many a febylle ¹ cellic.

5 A sak of strawe were there ryght good,
Ffor som must lyg ² theym in theyr hoo
I had as lefe be in the wood,

Without[e] mete or drynk.
For when that we shall go to bedde,
The pompe is ³ nygh oure beddes hede;
10 A man were as good be ⁴ dede
As smell therof the stynk.

¹ slightly built

² lie

³ MS. was

⁴ MS. to

RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC PIECES

ROLLE, THE FORM OF PERFECT LIVING

Richard Rolle, who was born near the end of the thirteenth century (the year is not known) at Thornton Dale, near Pickering in northern Yorkshire, was a hermit and mystic who wrote the first *original* [since the *Ancient Riddle* translated] English prose after the Conquest (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People*, 218). In his early youth he was sent as a student to Oxford, but was repelled by the scholastic philosophy there dominant, and made up his mind to turn to life of contemplation. For the next four years he lived in a solitary cell on the estate of friends who provided him with the necessities of life, and there he passed through three stages of the contemplative life — *purificatio*, *illuminatio*, and *contemplatio proper* (cf. H. O. Taylor, *The Mediæval Mind* 2. 362 ff.), the last of which he had the mystic sense of the direct vision of God. After traveling about for some time, in the hope of teaching his faith, as to which he met with little encouragement and considerable opposition, he settled near the recluse Margaret Kirkby at Ainderby, near Northallerton (famous for the battle of the Standard), also in the North Riding, where he gave assistance and instruction to her and other recluses. Later he lived and wrote at Hampole, five miles northwest of Doncaster, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where he died in 1349, and whence he has come to be known as Richard Rolle of Hampole.

Rolle was a figure apparently but little heeded by the authorities of his own time, yet one of real significance. In his emphasis on the direct relation between the individual soul and God, rather than on mere obedience to the Church, he was a forerunner of Wycliffe and Luther; and through the fervor of his mystical outpourings, he still makes a strong emotional appeal.

His works, which it is hard in some cases to distinguish from those of his imitators and translators, were sometimes written in Latin and sometimes in English, one of the best known of those in English being a long poem, *The Prick of Conscience*. His editor Horstman says of him: 'His chief characteristic as a writer is originality — he is essentially a genius; everywhere he cuts out new ways, lays new foundations. Next, he is preëminently a lyric; whether he writes in prose or verse, he writes from feeling, from momentary inspiration. Besides, he is of a remarkable versatility and facility; he writes with equal ease in Latin and English, in verse and prose, and in all kinds of verse, frequently mixing prose and verse in the same work; he writes postils, commentaries, epistles, satires, polemic treatises, prayers and devotions, lyric and didactic poetry, epigrams' (2. xxxv). Our selections are from his epistle known

as *The Form of Perfect Living*, as it appears in MS. Cambr. Dd. V. 64, where it is dedicated to the recluse Margaret. For this text, and for an extended account of Richard Rolle and his place in the history of mysticism, see *Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. C. Horstman, London, 1895, in *Yorkshire Writers* (*Library of Early English Writers*). Our selections are from Vol. 1, pp. 29-30, 46-9.

THE LOVE OF GOD

Amore languet. þi¹ twa wordes er² wryten in þe boke of lufe, þat es kalled þe Sang of Lufe, or þe Sang of Sanges. For he þat mykel³ lufes, hym lyst⁴ oft syng of his luf, for joy þat he or scho hase when þai thynk on þat þat þai lufe, namely⁵ if pair lover be trew and lufand.
 5 And þis es þe Inglisch of thies twa wordes: 'I languysch for lufe.' Sere⁶ men in erth has sere gyftes and graces of God, bot þe special gift of þas þat ledes solitary lyf es for to lufe Jesu Criste. þow says me: 'All men lufes hym þat haldes⁷ his comawndementes.' Soth it es. Bot all men þat kepes hys byddynge kepes noght also hys cown-
 10 sayle. And all þat dos his cownsell er noght also fulfylde of⁸ þe swetnes of his lufe, ne feles noght þe fyre of byrnand luf of hert. Forþi þe diversite of lufe makes þe diversite of halynes and of mede.⁹ In heven, þe awngels þat er byrnandest in lufe er nerrest God. Also men and women þat maste¹⁰ has of Goddes lufe, whether þai do penance or
 15 nane, þai sall be in þe heghest degre in heven; þai þat lufes hym lesse, in þe lawer order. If þou lufe hym mykel, mykel joy and swetnes and byrnyng þou feles in his lufe, þat es þi comforth and streng[t]h nyght and day. If þi lufe be not byrnand in hym, litel es þi delyte. For hym may na man fele in joy and swetnes, bot-if¹¹ þai be clene, and fylled
 20 with his lufe; and partill¹² sal þou com with grete travayle in praier and thynkyng, havand swilk meditacions þat er al in þe lufe and in þe lovyng of God. And when þou ert at þi mete, love ay God in þi thought at ilk a¹³ morsel, and say þus in þi hert: 'Loved be þou, Keyng, and thanked be þou, Keyng, and blyssed be þou, Keyng, Jesu all my
 25 joyng, of all þi giftes gude; þat for me spylt þi blude, and died on þe

¹ these; cf. Cant. 2. 5

² are

³ much, greatly

⁴ he desires

⁵ especially

⁶ diverse

⁷ keeps

⁸ filled with

⁹ reward

¹⁰ most

¹¹ unless

¹² to this condition, thereto

¹³ every

rude; þou gyf me grace to syng þe sang of þi lovyng.¹ And thynk it
 noght anely² whils þou etes, bot bath before and after, ay bot when³
 þou prayes or spekes. Or if þou have other thoghtes þat þou has⁴
 mare swetnes in and devocion þan in þase þat I lere⁵ þe, þou may thynk
 [þan]. For I hope þat God will do swilk⁶ thoghtes in þi hert als he
 es payde of,⁶ and als þou ert ordayne for. When þou prayes, loke
 noght how mykel þou says, bot how wele, þat þe lofe of þi hert be ay
 upwarde, and thy thought on þat þou sayes, als mykel als þow may. If
 þou be in prayers and meditacions al þe day, I wate⁷ wele þat þou mon
 wax⁸ gretely in þe lufe of Jesu Cryste, and mikel fele of delyte, and
 within schort tyme.

THE ACTIVE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Twa lyves þar er þat Cristen men lyfes. Ane es called actyve lyfe,
 for it es in mare⁹ bodili warke. Another, contemplatyve lyfe, for it
 es in mare swetnes gastely.¹⁰ Actife lyfe es mykel owteward, and in
 mare travel¹¹ and in mare peryle, for þe temptacions þat er in þe worlde.
 Contemplatyve lyfe es mykel inwarde, and forþi¹² it es lastandar,¹³ and
 sykerar,¹⁴ restfuller, delitable, luflyer, and mare medeful.¹⁵ For it
 hase joy in Goddes lufe, and savowre in þe lyf þat lastes ay, in þis
 present tyme, if it be right ledde. And þat felyng of joy in þe lufe of
 Jesu passes al other merites in erth. For it es swa harde to com to
 for þe freelte of oure flesch, and þe many temptacions þat we er um-
 sett¹⁷ with, þat lettes¹⁸ us nyght and day. Al other thynges er lyght
 at¹⁹ com to, in regarde þarof, for þat may na man deserve, bot anely
 it es gifen of Goddes godenes, til þam þat verrayli gifes þam to
 contemplacion and til quiete for Cristes luf.

Til men or wymen þat takes²⁰ þam til actife lyfe, twa thynges
 falles.²¹ Ane, for to ordayne þair meyne²² in drede and in þe lufe of

¹ only
² always except when
³ finest
⁴ teach
⁵ put such
⁶ satisfied with
⁷ know
⁸ must increase

⁹ more
¹⁰ spiritually
¹¹ labor, toil
¹² therefore
¹³ more lasting
¹⁴ more full of security
¹⁵ more delightful
¹⁶ full of reward

¹⁷ set about, surrounded
¹⁸ hinder
¹⁹ easy to
²⁰ betake
²¹ are appointed
²² household

God, and fynd þam þaire necessities, and þamself kepe enterely þe comandementes of God, doand¹ til þar neghbur als þai wil þat þai do til þam. Another es: þat þai do at þar power þe seven werkes of mercy, þe whilk es: to fede þe hungry; to gyf þe thristi a drynk; to
 5 cleth þe naked; to herbar hym þat hase na howsyng; to viset þe seke; to comforth þam þat er in prysoun; and to grave² dede men. Al þat mai, and hase³ cost,⁴ þai may noght be qwyte⁵ with ane or twa of þir, bot þam behoves do þam al, if þai wil have þe benyson⁶ on Domesday⁷ þat Jesu sal til⁸ al gyf þat dose þam. Or els may þai
 10 drede þe malysoun⁹ þat al mon¹⁰ have þat will noght do þam, when þai had godes¹¹ to do þam wyth.

Contemplatife lyf hase twa partyes,¹² a lower and a heer. Þe lower party es meditacion of haly wrytyng, þat es Goddes wordes, and in
 other gude thoghtes and swete þat men hase, of þe grace of God, abowt
 15 þe lufe of Jesu Criste, and also in lovyng of God in psalmes and ympnes,¹³ or in prayers. Þe hegher party of contemplacion es behaldyng and zernyng of¹⁴ þe thynges of heven, and joy in þe Haly Gaste. Þat men hase oft, and¹⁵ if it be swa þat þai be noght prayand with þe mowth, bot anely thynkand of God, and of þe fairehede¹⁶ of aungels
 20 and haly sawles.¹⁷ Þan may I say þat contemplacion es a wonderful joy of Goddes luf, þe whilk¹⁸ joy es lovyng of God, þat may noght be talde; and þat wonderful lovyng es in þe saule, and for abundance of joy and swettenes it ascendes in til þe mouth, swa þat þe hert and þe tonge acordes in ane,¹⁹ and body and sawle joyes in God lyvand.²⁰
 25 A man or woman þat es ordaynd til contemplatife lyfe, first God enspires þam to forsake þis worlde, and al þe vanite and þe covayties and þe vile luste þarof. Sythen²¹ he ledes þam by þar ane,²² and spekes til þair²³ hert, and, als þe prophete says, he gifes þam at sowke²⁴ þe swetnes of þe begynnyng of lufe, and þan he settes þam in will²⁵

¹ doing² bury³ MS. hase and mai (em. H.)⁴ money sufficient⁵ quit, released⁶ blessing⁷ Day of Judgment⁸ to⁹ malediction¹⁰ must¹¹ goods¹² parts, phases¹³ hymns¹⁴ for¹⁵ even¹⁶ fairness, beauty¹⁷ souls¹⁸ which¹⁹ agree²⁰ living²¹ afterwards²² by themselves, alone²³ MS. gar²⁴ to suck²⁵ makes them desire

to. gyf þam haly¹ to prayers and meditations and teres. Sithen, when þai have sufferd many temptacions, and [þe]² foule noyes³ of hoghtes þat er ydel, and of vanitees þe whilk wil comber þam þat can nocht destroy þam, er passand away, he gars þam⁴ geder⁵ til þam air hert, and fest⁶ ancly in hym, and opens til þe egh⁷ of þair sawls the gates of heven, swa þat þe ilk⁸ egh lokes in til heven; and þain þe ire of lufe verrali ligges⁹ in þair hert, and byrnes þarin, and makes it] clene of al erthly filth; and sithen forward¹⁰ þai er contemplatife nen, and ravyst¹¹ in lufe. For contemplacion es a syght, and þai se n til heven with þar gastly egh. Bot þou sal witt¹² þat na man hase overfite syght of heven whils þai er lifand bodili here; bot als sone als ai dye þai er broght before God, and sese hym face til face, and egh il egh, and wones¹³ with hym withouten ende. For hym þai soght, and hym þai covayted, and hym þai lufed, in al þar myght.

Loo, Margarete, I have schortly sayde þe¹⁴ þe forme of lyvyng, and now þou may com til perfection, and to lufe hym þat þou hase taken þe til. If it do þe gude, and profit til þe, thank God, and pray for me. Þe grace of Jesu Criste be with þe, and kepe þe. Amen.

THE ANCLEN RIWLE

The *Anclen Riwle* (*Regula Inclusarum*) was written for the guidance of three sisters of gentle blood who had given themselves up to a religious life, without having at that time become nuns. It exists in three languages—French, English, and Latin—the English having been translated from French, and the Latin from English (G. C. Macaulay, in *Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 63 ff.).

The author has been thus characterized: 'His doctrine may be summed up in a word: he teaches self-renunciation. But he does it in so kindly and affectionate a tone that the life he wishes his penitents to submit to does not seem too bitter; his voice is so sweet that the existence he describes seems almost sweet' (Jusserand, *Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 212). His 'work betokens much learning, great knowledge of the human heart, as well as deep piety,

wholly

em. H.

annoyances, troubles

causes them

gather, collect

⁶ fix

⁷ eyes

⁸ same

⁹ lies

¹⁰ from that time on

¹¹ ravished, rapt

¹² know

¹³ dwell

¹⁴ to thee

15. Margarete: probably Dame Margaret Kyrkby, an anchoress for whom he felt a holy affection.

and a refined and gentle spirit' (Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.* 1. 200). Ten Brink also refers (*ibid.* 2¹. 16) to 'that aroma, that tinge of poetry, which breathes throughout the language of the *Ancren Riwele*,' to which, as well as to the author's deep spirituality, the work owes its unusual appeal.

Judging from its language, the *Ancren Riwele* was written in the early thirteenth century. The best text is contained in a Cambridge manuscript designated by Macaulay as B (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 145). Our selections are taken from Morton's text (*The Ancren Riwele*, London, 1853), in which MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Nero A. XIV is reproduced; the pages are 50-2, 72, 132-4, 388-90, 416-22, 422-4. The dialect is southwestern. Morton's translation is published in *The King's Classics* as *The Nun's Rule*.

ANCHORESSES NOT TO LOOK OUT UPON THE WORLD

Vorþui,¹ mine leove² sustren,³ þe leste þæt ze ever muwen luvieð
our þurles⁴; al beon heo lute,⁵ þe parluris⁶ lest⁷ and nerewest. Þe
cloð in ham beo⁸ twovold: blac cloð; þe creoz⁹ hwit, wiðinnen and
wiðuten. Þe blake cloð bitockneð þæt ze beoð blake and unwurðe¹⁰
5 toward¹¹ þe worlde wiðuten; þæt te soðe sunne, þæt is Jesu Crist,
haveð¹² wiðuten vorkuled¹³ ou; and so wiðuten, ase ze beoð, unseau-
liche imaked ou¹⁴ þurh gleames¹⁵ of his grace. Þet hwite creoz
limpeð¹⁶ to ou; vor þreo manere¹⁷ creozices beoð—reade and blake
and hwite. Þe reade limpeð to þeo þæt beoð, vor Godes luv, mid
10 hore¹⁸ blodshedunge irudded¹⁹ and ireaded,¹⁹ ase þe martirs weren. Þe
blake creoz limpeð to þeo²⁰ þæt makieð i ðe²¹ worlde hore penitence vor
lodliche²² sunnen.²³ Þe hwite creoz limpeð to hwit meidenhod and
to clenness,²⁴ þæt is muchel pine²⁵ wel vor to holden.²⁶ Pine is overal²⁷
þurh creoz idon to understonden.²⁸ Þus bitockneð hwit croiz þe ward²⁹

1 wherefore

2 dear

3 sisters

4 love your windows the
least that ye ever may

5 and let them all be small

6 those of the parlor

7 smallest

8 let it be

9 cross

10 of no value

11 in the sight of

12 has

13 discolored

14 and so has made you exter-
nally as you are, uncomely

15 rays

16 belongs, appertains

17 three kinds

18 their

19 reddened

20 those

21 in the

22 foul, loathsome

23 sins

24 purity

25 difficulty, pains

26 preserve

27 everywhere

28 given to understand =
to be understood

29 keeping

1. leste . . . luvieð: properly, according to the French (*Mod. Lang. Rev.* 9. 65), 'the best that you ever can guard,' etc.

of hwit chastite, þæt is muchel pine wel vor to witene.¹ þe blake cloð also tekeðe² bitocnunge,³ deð⁴ lesse cile⁵ to þen cien, and is piccure agein þe wind, and wurse to purhscon,⁶ and halt⁷ hiis heou⁸ betere vor winde and for oðer hwat.⁹ Lokeð þæt te¹⁰ parlurs beon ever veste¹¹ on everiche halve,¹² and eke wel istekene¹³; and witeð¹⁴ þer our¹⁵ cien, leste þe heorte eftleo¹⁶ and wende ut, ase of David,¹⁷ and oure soule secli¹⁸ so sone heo is ute. Ich write muchel vor oðre. þæt noðing ne etrineð ou,¹⁹ mine leove sustren, vor nabbe ge²⁰ nout þene nome,²¹ ne ne schulen habben, þurh þe grace of Gode, of totinde²² ancren,²³ ne of tollinde lokunges²⁴ ne lates,²⁵ þæt summe, oðer hwules,²⁶ weilawei! unkundeliche²⁷ makieð; vor agein kunde²⁸ hit is, and unmeð²⁹ sullic³⁰ wunder, þæt te deade totie,³¹ and mid cwike worldes men³² wede,³³ wið sunne.

'Me³⁴ leove sire,' seið sum inouh reaðe,³⁵ 'and is hit nu so overuvel³⁶ vor te³⁷ toten utward?' 3e hit, leove suster, vor uvel þæt ter³⁸ kumeð of hit, is uvel over uvel³⁹ to everich ancre, and nomeliche⁴⁰ to þe gunge, and to þen old vorðui⁴¹ þæt heo to þe gunge gived uvel vorbisne,⁴² and scheld⁴³ to werien ham mide.⁴⁴ Vor, gif ei⁴⁵ etwit⁴⁶ ham, þeonne siggeð heo anon riht⁴⁷: 'Me sire, þeo deð also þeo⁴⁸ is betere þen Ich am, and wot betere þen Ich wot hwat heo haveð to donne.' O leove gunge ancren, ofte a ful hawur⁴⁹ smið smeoðið⁵⁰ a ful woc⁵¹ knif, and te wise ouh⁵² to volewen wisdom, and nout folie, and an olde ancre mei don wel þæt tu⁵³ dest uvele. Auh⁵⁴ toten ut wiðuten uvel ne mei

1 guard

2 teaches

3 symbol, emblem

4 does

5 ill

6 see through

7 holds, keeps

8 hue, color

9 anything else

10 the

11 fast

12 side

13 shut

14 guard

15 your

16 fly out, escape

17 like David's

18 become sick

19 for nothing [of this] applies to you

20 ye have not

21 the name

22 peering

23 anchoresses

24 enticing looks

25 manners, gestures

26 at times

27 inconsistently

28 against nature

29 exceedingly

30 strange; MS. swuc

31 should look out

32 living men of the world

33 wed

34 my

35 quickly enough

36 very evil

37 to

38 there

39 evil beyond evil

40 especially

41 because

42 example

43 a shield

44 defend themselves with

45 any one

46 reprove, chide

47 straightway

48 she does it also who

49 clever, skilful

50 forges

51 weak, poor

52 ought

53 thou

54 but

nouðer of ou; and nim nu geme¹ hwat uvel beo icumen of totinge: nout on uvel ne two, auh al þe uvel and al þe wo þæt nu is, and ever ȝete was, and ever schal iwurðen²—al com of a sihðe. Þæt hit beo soð, lo her þe preove³: Lucifer, þurh þæt he iseih and biheold on himself his owene veirness, leop⁴ into prude,⁵ and bicom of⁶ engel atelich⁷ deovel; and of Eve, ure alre⁸ moder, is iwrten on alre crest,⁹ in hire neowe¹⁰ ingong¹¹ of hire eiesihðe: *Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile, et tulit de fructu ejus et comedit, deditque viro,*¹² þæt is: ‘Eve biheold o¹³ þen vorbodene eppel, and iseih hine¹⁴ veir, and veng¹⁵ to deliten i þe biholdunge, and turnde hire lust þer toward, and nom¹⁶ and et þerof, and ȝef hire loverd.’ Lo hu Holi Writ spekeð, and hu inwardliche¹⁷ hit telleð hu sunegunge¹⁸ bigon. Þus eode¹⁹ sihðe bivoren, and makede wei to²⁰ uvel lust; and com þe deað þerefter, þæt al monkun iveleð.²¹ Þes eppel, love susteren, bitocneð alle þe þing þæt lust falleð²² to, and delit of sunne. Hwon þu biholdest te mon, þu ert in Eve point²³: þu lokest o þen eppel.

THE BEAUTY OF SILENCE

Seneca seide: *Ad summam [volo] vos esse rariloquos, tuncque pauciloquos.*²⁴ Þæt is þe ende of þe tale, seið Seneke the wise: ‘Ichulle²⁵ þæt ȝe speken selde, and þeonne buten lutel.’ Auh moni-punt²⁶ hire word vor te leten mo ut, as me deð water et ter mulne cluse²⁷; and so duden Jobes freond²⁸ þæt weren icumen to vrovren²⁹ him: seten³⁰ stille alle seoveniht.³¹ Auh þeo³² [heo] hefden alles bigunne vor to spekene, þeone kuðen heo nevere astunten³³ hore cleppe.³⁴ Greg.:

¹ take thou heed

² come to pass

³ proof

⁴ leaped

⁵ pride

⁶ instead of

⁷ hateful, foul

⁸ of us all

⁹ first of all

¹⁰ fresh

¹¹ beginning

¹² Gen. 3.6

¹³ looked upon

¹⁴ it

¹⁵ began

¹⁶ took

¹⁷ showing the inward causes

¹⁸ sinning

¹⁹ went

²⁰ for

²¹ feeleth

²² inclines

²³ in Eve's case

²⁴ Not found

²⁵ I will, desire

²⁶ shut in, restrain

²⁷ at the mill-dam

²⁸ friends

²⁹ comfort

³⁰ they sat

³¹ for a full week

³² when

³³ they never knew how

to stop

³⁴ talking

THE ANCLEN RIWLE

Censura silentii nutritura est verbi; so hit is ine monie, ase Gregorie seið: 'Silence is wordes fostrild.¹¹ *Juge silentium cogit cele meditari*: 'Long silence, and wel iwust,² nedeð³ þe þouhtes up touw, per heovene.' Also ase ge muwen iseon þe water, hwon me punt h and stoppeð⁴ bivoren wel,⁵ so þet hit ne muwe⁶ aduneward, þeom is hit ined⁷ aȝein vor to climben upward. And ge al pisses weis pundeð⁹ ower wordes, and forstoppeð¹⁰ ower þouhtes, ase ge wulleð þæt heo climben and hien touward heovene, and nout ne vallen aduneward, and to vleoten¹¹ ȝeond¹² te world, ase deð muchel cheafle.¹³ Auh hwon ge nede moten¹⁴ speken a lutewiht,¹⁵ leseð up¹⁶ ower mudes flogzetten,¹⁷ ase me deð et ter¹⁸ mulne, and leteð¹⁹ adun sone.

THE HAPPINESS OF ANCHORESSES IS LIKE THAT OF THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN

Auh God cleopeð²⁰ þe gode ancren briddes of heovene, ase Ich er²¹ seiðe: *Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres celi nidos*²²: 'Voxes habbeð hore holes, and briddes of heovene hore nestes.' Treowe ancren beoð ariht²³ briddes of heovene þet fleoð an heih, ant sitteð singinde¹⁵ murie²⁴ o ðe²⁵ grene bowes; þet is, þencheð²⁶ upp, and of þe blisse of heovene, þet never ne valeweð,²⁷ auh is ever grene, and sitteð o pisse grene, singinde swuðe²⁸ murie; þet is, resteð ham inne swuche þouhte, and habbeð muruhðe of heorte, ase þeo þet singeð. Brid þauh,²⁹ oðer wule,³⁰ vor te sechen³¹ his mete³² vor þe vlesches neode, lihteð adun²⁰ per eorðe; auh þeo hwule þet³³ hit sit o per eorðe, nis hit never er, auh biwent³⁴ him ofte, and biloked³⁵ him ever ȝeorneliche³⁶ al ten. Alriht³⁷ so, þe gode ancre, ne vleo heo³⁸ never so heie, heo

er-mother, nurse

check (it)
(flow)
compelled
way
check (imperative)

14 needs must
15 little
16 open up
17 the floodgates of your mouth
18 at the
19 let them
20 calleth
21 before
22 Matt. 8.20
23 indeed
24 merrily
25 on the
26 meditate

27 fadeth
28 very
29 a bird, however
30 sometimes
31 seek
32 food
33 the while that, while
34 turns
35 looks
36 carefully, cautiously
37 just
38 although she fly

mot lihten oðer hwules adun to þe eorðe of hire bodie, eten, drinken, slepen, wurchen, speken, iheren (of þet needeð to),¹ of eorðliche þinges. Auh þeonne, as þe brid deð, heo mot wel biſeon hire,² and biholden hire on ilchere half,³ þet heo nouhwar ne miſuime,⁴ keſte
 5 heo beo ikeiht⁵ þuruh ſumme of þe deofles gromen,⁶ oðer ihuut ſummes weis, þe hwule þæt heo ſit ſo lowe.

✓ THE KINGLY WOOR

A lefdi was⁷ þet was mid hire voan⁸ biſet al abuten, and hire lond al deſtued, and heo al poure, wiðinnen one eorðene caſtle. On⁹ mihti kinges lue was, þauh,¹⁰ biturnd upon hire, ſo unimete¹¹ ſwuðe
 10 þet he vor wouhleccunge¹² ſende hire his ſonden,¹³ on efter oðer, and ofte ſomed monie,¹⁴ and ſende hire beaubelet¹⁵ boðe veole¹⁶ and feire, and ſukurs¹⁷ of liueneð,¹⁸ and help of his heie hird¹⁹ to holden hire caſtel. Heo underveng²⁰ al aſe on unrecheleas þing,²¹ þet was ſo herd iheorted þet hire lue ne mihte he never beon þe neorre. Hwat
 15 wult tu more? He com himſulf a²² laſt, and ſcheawede hire his feire neb,²³ aſe þe²⁴ þet was of alle men veireſt to biholden, and ſpec²⁵ ſwuðe ſweteliche and ſo murie wordes þet heo²⁶ muhten þe deade arearen²⁷ vrom deaðe to live, and wrouhte veole wundres, and dude veole meſtries²⁸ bivoren hire eihſihðe, and ſcheawede hire his mihten;
 20 tolde hire of his kinedome, and bead²⁹ for to makien hire cwene of al þet he ouhte.³⁰ Al þis ne help nout. Nes³¹ þis wunderlich hoker³²? Vor heo nes never wurðe vor te beon his ſchelchine.³³ Auh ſo, þuruh his debonerté,³⁴ lue hefde overkumen hine þet he ſeide on ende³⁵:
 'Dame, þu ert iweorred,³⁶ and þine von³⁷ beoð ſo ſtronge þet tu ne

¹ ſo far as is neceſſary

² look about her

³ on every ſide

⁴ make a miſtake

⁵ caught

⁶ ſnares

⁷ there was

⁸ foes

⁹ a

¹⁰ however

¹¹ boundleſſly

¹² for wooing, to woo her

¹³ meſſengers

¹⁴ many together

¹⁵ jewels (baubles)

¹⁶ many

¹⁷ help, aid

¹⁸ food

¹⁹ army

²⁰ received

²¹ a heedleſſ creature

²² at

²³ face, countenance

²⁴ he

²⁵ ſpoke

²⁶ they

²⁷ arouſe

²⁸ brave deeds

²⁹ offered

³⁰ owned, poſſeſſed

³¹ is not

³² contempt, diſdain

³³ ſlave, ſcullion

³⁴ graciousneſſ, kindneſſ

³⁵ finally

³⁶ attacked, warred againſt

³⁷ foes

meiht nones weis,¹ wiðuten sukurs of me, etfleon² hore honden, þet heo ne don þe to scheomefule deað. Ich chulle,³ vor þe luve of þe, nimen þis fiht upon me, and aredden⁴ þe of ham þet secheð⁵ þine deað. Ich wot, þauh, forsoðe, þet Ich schal bitweonen⁶ ham under-vongen⁷ deaðes wunde, and Ich hit wulle heorteliche vor to ofgon⁸ 5 þine heorte. Nu, þeonne, biseche Ich þe, vor þe luve þet Ich kuðe þe,⁹ þet tu luvie me, hure and hure¹⁰ efter þen ilke 'deaðe,¹¹ hwon þu noldes lives.¹² Þes king dude al þus — aredde hire of alle hire von, and was himself to wundre¹³ ituked,¹⁴ and isleien on ende.¹⁵ Þuruh miracle, þauh, he aros from deaðe to live. Nere¹⁶ þeos ilke lefdi of 10 uvele kunnes kunde,¹⁷ gif heo over alle þing¹⁸ ne luve him herefter?

Þes king is Jesu Crist, Godes Sune, þet al o þisse wise¹⁹ wowude²⁰ ure soule, þet þe deoflen heveden biset. And he, ase noble woware, efter monie messagers and feole²¹ god deden, com vor to preoven his luve, and scheawede þuruh knihtschipe²² þet he was luve-wurðe,²³ ase 15 weren sumewhule²⁴ knihtes iwuned²⁵ for to donne. He dude him ine²⁶ turnement, and hefde, vor his leofmonnes²⁷ luve, his schelde ine vihte,²⁸ ase kene kniht, on everiche half ipurled.²⁹

THE ANCHORESS' CAT, HER CLOTHING AND OCCUPATIONS

Se, mine leove sustren, ne schulen habben no best³⁰ bute kat one.³¹ Ancre þet haveð eihte³² puncheð³³ bet³⁴ husewif, ase Marthe was, þen 20 ancre; ne none wise ne mei heo beon Marie,³⁵ mid griðfulnesse³⁶ of heorte. Vor þeonne mot³⁷ heo þenchen of þe kues³⁸ foddre, and of

1 in no way

2 escape from

3 will

4 deliver

5 seek; MS. schecheð

6 amongst

7 receive

8 deserve, win

9 show thee

10 at least

11 MS. dead deaðe

12 in life

13 wonderfully, grievously

14 maltreated, injured

15 finally

16 were not

17 of a perverse sort of nature

18 above all things

19 in this manner

20 wooed

21 many

22 knightly prowess

23 worthy of love; MS. -wurde

24 sometimes

25 wont

26 entered into

27 sweetheart, lady

28 in the fight

29 pierced in all parts

30 beast, animal

31 except only a cat

32 cattle

33 seems

34 better

35 Mary

36 peace

37 must

38 cow's

ne heiward,³ warien⁴ hwon me punt
 Wat Crist,⁷ þis is lodlich þing
 of ancre eihte. Þauh, gif eni mot
 nede habben ku, loke þet heo none monne ne eilic,⁹ ne ne hermie,¹⁰
 5 ne þet hire þouht ne beo nout þeron uestned.¹¹ Ancre ne ouh¹²
 nout to habben no þing þet drawe utward hire heorte. None cheffare¹³
 ne drive¹⁴ ge. Ancre þet is cheapild,¹⁵ heo cheapeð¹⁶ hire soule þe
 chepmon¹⁷ of helle. Ne wite¹⁸ ge nout in oure¹⁹ huse of oðer monnes
 10 pinges, ne eihte, ne cloðes; ne nout ne undervo²⁰ ge þe chirche vesti-
 menz, ne þene caliz,²¹ bute-gif²² strencoðe hit makie,²³ oðer muchel eie;²⁴
 vor of swuche witunge²⁵ is ikumen muchel uvel oftesiden.²⁶ Wiðinnen
 over woanes²⁷ ne lete ge nenne mon slepen. Gif muchel neode mid
 alle²⁸ makeð breken²⁹ over hus, þe hwule þet hit ever is ibroken, loke
 þet ge habben þerinne mid ou one wummon of clene live deies and
 15 nihtes.³⁰

Vorði³¹ þet no mon ne isihð ou, ne ge iseoð nenne mon, wel mei
 don of³² over cloðes, beon heo hwite, beon heo blake; bute þet heo
 beon unorne³³ and warme, and wel ivrouhte—velles³⁴ wel itauwed,³⁵
 and habbeð ase monie ase ou toneodeð,³⁶ to bedde and eke to rugge.³⁷
 20 Nextst fleshe ne schal mon werien no linene cloð, bute-gif hit beo
 of herde³⁸ and of greate heorden.³⁹ Stamin⁴⁰ habbe hwose wule, and
 hwose wule mei beon buten.⁴¹ Ge schulen ligger in on heater,⁴² and
 igurd.⁴³ Ne bere⁴⁴ ge non iren,⁴⁵ ne here,⁴⁶ ne irspiles⁴⁷ felles; ne ne

¹ herdsman's hire² flatter³ hayward (keeper of the hedges, who prevented cattle from injuring private property)⁴ defend herself⁵ they shut it up⁶ pay the damages, more-over⁷ Christ knows⁸ they make complaint⁹ annoy¹⁰ harm¹¹ fixed¹² ought¹³ traffic, business¹⁴ carry on¹⁵ trafficker¹⁶ sells¹⁷ to the bargainer¹⁸ take charge¹⁹ your²⁰ receive²¹ chalice²² unless²³ make necessary²⁴ fear²⁵ guarding, care-taking²⁶ oftentimes²⁷ dwelling²⁸ after all²⁹ to be used³⁰ by day and night³¹ because³² do with, be content with³³ plain³⁴ skins³⁵ tawed, dressed³⁶ you need³⁷ also for your back³⁸ hards, tow³⁹ coarse canvas⁴⁰ harsh rough cloth, used for penitential shirts (cf. F. *étamine*)⁴¹ without⁴² a garment⁴³ girt⁴⁴ wear⁴⁵ iron⁴⁶ haircloth⁴⁷ porcupines

beate ou þermide,¹ ne mid schurge² ileðered³ ne ileaded,⁴ ne mid holic,⁵ ne mid breres⁶; ne ne biblodge hiresulf⁷ wiðuten schriftes⁸ leave; ne ne nime, et enes, to veole⁹ disciplines.¹⁰ Ower schone beon¹¹ greate and warne. Ine sumer ðe habbeð leave vor to gon and sitten barvot, and¹² hosen wiðuten vaumpez,¹³ and ligge inc ham,¹⁴ hwoso likeð.¹⁵ } { 3if ðe muwen beon wimpelleas,¹⁶ beoð bi¹⁷ warme keppen¹⁸ and þeruppon blake veiles. Hwoso wule beon isciē, þauh heo atiffe¹⁹ hire nis nout muchel wunder; auh to Godes cien heo is lufsumere, þet is, vor þe lufe of him, uniffed wiðuten. Ring ne broche nabbe ðe, ne gurdel imenbred,²⁰ ne gloven, ne no swuch þing þet ou ne deið²¹ for to habben. }

Ever me is leovere so²² ðe don grettire werkes. Ne makie none purses, vor te vreonden ou mide,²³ ne blodbendes²⁴ of seolke, auh schepieð,²⁵ and seouweð,²⁶ and amendeð²⁷ chirche cloðes, and poure monne cloðes. No þing ne schule ðe ðiven wiðuten schriftes leave. Helpeð mid ower owune swinke,²⁸ so vorð so²⁹ ðe muwen, to schruden³⁰ ou sulven and þeo þet ou serveð, ase Seint Jerome lereð.³¹ }

THE ANCHORESS' HEALTH

3e ne schulen senden lettres, ne undervon lettres, ne writen uten leave. 3e schulen beon idodded³² four siðen i ðe ðere, vor to lihten ower heaved³³; and ase ofte ileten blod,³⁴ and oftere gif neod is; and hwoso mei beon þer wiðuten,³⁵ Ich hit mei wel iðolien.³⁶ Hwon ðe beoð ileten blod, ðe ne schulen don no þing, þeo þreo dawes, þet ou greve,³⁷ auh talkeð mid ower meidenes and mid þeaufule³⁸ talen schurteð³⁹ ou

¹ therewith² scourge³ made of leather⁴ leaded⁵ holly⁶ briars⁷ let her not cause herself to bleed⁸ of the confessor⁹ too many¹⁰ flagellations¹¹ let your shoes be¹² and (to wear)¹³ vamps¹⁴ whoever likes may lie in them¹⁵ without wimples¹⁶ be provided with¹⁷ capes¹⁸ adorn¹⁹ linked²⁰ you ought not²¹ I am always more pleased if²² gain you friends with²³ bandages to stop bleeding²⁴ fashion²⁵ sew²⁶ mend²⁷ labor²⁸ so far as²⁹ clothe³⁰ teacheth³¹ have your hair clipped³² your head³³ have blood let³⁴ be able to be without this³⁵ suffer, permit³⁶ that may grieve you, be disagreeable to you³⁷ edifying³⁸ divert

togederes. Ze muwen don so ofte hwon ou punched hevie,¹ oðer beoð vor sume worldliche þinge sorie oðer seke. So wisliche witeð ou² in our³ blodletunge, and holdeð ou ine swuche reste þei ze longe þer-
 5 æfter muwen ine Godes servise þe monluker⁴ swinken, and also hwon ze iveleð eni secnesse; vor muchel sotschipe⁵ hit is vor to voricosen, vor one deie, tene oðer twelve.

A TREATISE AGAINST MIRACLE-PLAYS

This tract, in the form of a sermon, was first printed by Halliwell (in *Reliquie Antiquæ* 2. 42 ff.) from a manuscript volume of sermons in the library of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. This is now British Museum MS. Add. 24,202, which is designated in the catalogue as 'Wycliffite Tracts in English.' The manuscript is described as a small folio, vellum, of the end of the fourteenth century. Unless otherwise stated, the readings given below repose upon my collation of this manuscript. As there is considerable variation in the orthography, I have sought to render it more consistent, especially in the endings. Emendations marked 'M' are those of Mätzner in his *Altenglische Sprachproben*; the others are mine.

The following selections give the main argument of the tract, which is headed: 'Here bigynnys a tretise of miraclis-pleyinge.' The outline which follows may help to make the argument clear. Detailed notes can be found in Mätzner's edition.

- I. Introduction. Christ's miracles were performed in earnest, and therefore ought not to be represented in play.
 1. Such representation takes away our fear of God, and, as a result, the strength of our faith.
 2. It contradicts the teaching of Christ.
 3. It leads to scorn of God: the players make sport of his passion.
- II. There are six arguments in favor of miracle-plays. Men say:
 1. They are given for the sake of worship.
 2. By them many are converted to a good life, seeing, as they do, the manifest work of the devil.
 3. Often the sight of Christ's passion moves men to tears.
 4. Some men may be drawn to religion through play, who would never be moved by seriousness.
 5. Men must have some recreation; why not that of a good sort?
 6. We do not object to paintings of miracles; why, then, to dramatic portrayals of them?
- III. But there are answers to all these arguments:
 1. The giving of such plays springs from heathenism, and is not worship. Worship consists in doing the will of God.

¹ you are in low spirits

² guard yourselves

³ your

⁴ more vigorously

⁵ folly

⁶ lose

2. Though good may sometimes come of evil, this is not the rule. Miracle-plays most often pervert those who see them.
3. If the spectators weep, it is purely from external causes, not from consciousness of their own sin.
4. If men are ever converted by miracle-plays, it is only to show the grace of God. But men are seldom converted by such means; conversion comes from the earnest working of God, not from playing.
5. Plays do not afford true recreation.
6. Good paintings merely exhibit truth, but plays are mainly to delight men's bodily senses.

IV. A friend declares :

1. That he will not abandon his interest in miracle-plays unless their sinfulness can be proved directly from Holy Writ.

Answer: Such plays are against the spirit of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' (Illustration: One would not represent in a play the death of one's own father.)

2. That if the giving of such plays is sin, it is but a small sin.

Answer: Any sin, however small, is deadly sin.

Moreover, the danger in such playing is shown by the analogy of the following stories, with their mediæval allegorical interpretations:

- a. Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 21. 8-10).
- b. The children of Abner and those of Joab (2 Sam. 2. 12-32).
- c. Moses and the children of Israel (Exod. 32).
- d. Elisha (2 Kings 2. 23-4).
- e. Noah (as referred to in Matt. 24. 38-9).

- V. If we are to play, let us do so in the spirit of David (2 Sam. 6. 15-6, 20-2), (1) realizing how God's grace to us surpasses that to our neighbors; (2) being always devout before God, though disliked by the world; (3) being lowly in our own eyes.

Knowe þee, Cristen men, þat as Crist, God and man, is boþe weye, trewþ, and lif,¹ as seiþ þe gospel of Jon (weye to þe errynge, trewþe to þe unknowyng and doutyng, lif to þe styynge² to hevene and werynge³), so Crist dyde⁴ noþinge to us but ef[f]ectuely in weye of mercy, in treuþe of ri[ȝ]twesnes, and in lif of ȝildyng⁵ everlastyng joye for oure continuely⁶ mo[u]rnyng and sorwyng in þis valey of teeres.⁷ Þe⁸ myraclis, þerfore, þat Crist dyde⁴ heere in erþe, ouþer in⁹ hymself ouþer in hise seyntis, weren so ef[f]ectuel and in earnest don,¹⁰ þat to synful men þat erren þei brouȝten forȝyvenesse of synne, settinge hem in þe weye of riȝt bileve; to doutouse¹¹ men not stedefast þei brouȝten in kunnyng¹² to betere plesen God, and verry hope

¹ John 14. 6

² those climbing upward

³ growing weary

⁴ MS. dude

⁵ yielding

⁶ MS. continuely

⁷ Ps. 84. 6 (in the Latin)

⁸ MS. in (em. M.)

⁹ through

¹⁰ MS. done

¹¹ doubting

¹² ability

in God to ben¹ stedefast in hym; and to þe wery of þe wey
 God, for þe grette penaunce and suffraunce of þe trybulacioun
 men moten² han³ þerinne, þei brouȝten in love of brynnyr
 charite, to þe whiche alle þing is list,⁴ and⁵ were⁶ he to suffi
 5 depe, þe whiche men most dreden, for þe everlastynge lyf and
 þat men most loven and desiren⁷: of þe whiche þing verry
 puttiþ away alle werinesse heere in þe weye of God. Þanne, syþ
 myraclis of Crist and of hyse seyntis weren þus effectuel, as by
 bileve we ben in certeyn,¹¹ no man shulde usen in bourde¹²
 10 pley¹³ þe myraclis and werkis þat Crist so earnestfully¹⁴ wrouȝte to
 helpe¹⁵; for whoever so do[i]þ, he erriþ in þe byleve, reversiþ¹⁶ C
 and scorniþ¹⁷ God. He erriþ in þe bileve, for in þat he takiþ þe
 precious werkis of God in pley and bourde, he¹⁸ takiþ his nam
 idil,¹⁹ and so mysusiþ oure byleve. A, Lord! syþen an erþely serv
 15 dar not taken²⁰ in pley and in bourde þat þat his²¹ erþely lord t
 in earnest, myche more we shulden not maken oure pley¹⁸ and bo
 of þo myraclis and werkis þat God so earnestfully wrouȝt[e] to
 for,²² soþely whan we so don,²³ drede to synne²⁴ is taken²⁰ away
 a servaunt whan he bourdiþ²⁵ wiþ his mayster leesip²⁶ his dred
 20 offenden²⁷ hym, namely, whanne he bourdiþ wiþ his mayster in
 þat²⁸ his mayster takiþ in earnest. . . .

Þanne, syþen þes myraclis-pleyeris taken in bourde þe ernest
 werkis of God, no doute þat þei ne²⁹ scornen God, as dyden³⁰ þe J
 þat bobbiden³¹ Crist; for þei lowen³² at his passioun, as þese lawg
 25 and japen at³⁴ þe myraclis of God. Þerfore, as þei scorniden³³ C
 so þese³⁶ scorne[n] God; and rigt³⁷ as Pharao, wroop³⁸ to do[n]

1 MS. been

2 must needs

3 MS. have

4 burning

5 easy

6 if

7 MS. omits were; M. he were

8 MS. suffere

9 MS. di-

10 since

11 assured

12 game, sport

13 MS. pleye

14 MS. ernyst-

15 salvation

16 contradicts

17 MS. -yþ

18 MS. and so

19 vain

20 MS. -un

21 MS. her (em. M.)

22 MS. ffor

23 MS. done

24 of sinning

25 jests, makes merry

26 loses

27 MS. -yn

28 MS. in þat in þat

29 MS. ne þei

30 MS. diden

31 mocked, made sport

32 laughed

33 MS. lowyn

34 MS. of

35 MS. -eden

36 MS. þese

37 just

38 hating

þat God bad hym, dispiside God,¹ so þese myraclis-pleyeris and
-mayntenours,² leevynge plesingly³ to do[n] þat God biddiþ hem,
scornen God. He, forsoþe, haþ beden us alle to halowen⁴ his name,
gyvyng drede and reverence in alle mynde⁵ of his werkis, wiþoute
ony pleying[e] or japyng, as al holynesse is in ful earnest men; þanne, 5
pleyinge þe name of Goddis myraclis,⁶ as plesyngly þei leeve[n] to do[n]
þat God biddiþ hem, so þei scornen his name, and so scornen⁷ hym.

But hereagenus⁸ þei seyen [r] þat þei pleyen þese myraclis in þe
worschip of God, and so dyden not þese Jewis þat bobbiden Crist.
Also, [2] ofte siþis⁹ by siche myraclis-pleyinge ben¹⁰ men convertid 10
to gode lyvyng, as men and wymmen, seyng in myraclis-pleyinge
þat þe devul by þer aray, by þe whiche þei moven eche on opere¹¹ to
leccherie and to pride, makip hem his servauntis to bryngen hemsilf
and many opere to helle, and to han¹² fer more vylenye hereafter, by¹³
þer proude aray heere, þan þei han worschipe heere; and seyng,¹⁴ 15
ferþermore, þat al þis worldly beyng heere is but vanite for a while —
as is myraclis-pleying[e] — þei¹⁵ leeven þer pride, and taken to hem
afterward þe meke conversac[i]oun of Crist and of hise seyntis, and
so myraclis-pleyinge turnip¹⁶ men to þe bileve, and not pervertip.¹⁷
Also, [3] ofte syþis by siche myraclis-pleyinge men and wymmen, 20
seyng þe passioun of Crist and of hise seyntis, ben movyd to com-
passion and devocion, wepyng bitere teris; þanne þei ben not scorn-
yng of God, but worschipyng. Also, [4] profitable¹⁸ to men and to
þe worschipe of God it is to fulfillen¹⁹ and sechen alle þe menes by
þe whiche men mowen²⁰ fleen²¹ synne, and drawen hem to vertues. 25
And syþen as²² þer ben men þat on[e]ly by earnestful doynge wylen
be[n] convertid to God, so þer ben²³ opere men þat wylen not be[n] con-
vertid to God but by gamen and pley; and now on dayes²⁴ men ben
not convertid by þe earnestful doynge of God ne of men, þanne²⁵ now

¹ Exod. 7. 13 ff.

² those who defend and sup-
port them

³ omitting for the sake of
pleasure

⁴ MS. -yn

⁵ remembrance

⁶ MS. miraclis

⁷ MS. -yn

⁸ in opposition to this

⁹ oftentimes

¹⁰ are

¹¹ each one the other

¹² have

¹³ because of

¹⁴ MS. seeynge

¹⁵ MS. wherþoru þie

¹⁶ MS. -eþ

¹⁷ does not pervert them

¹⁸ MS. proph-

¹⁹ MS. -un

²⁰ may

²¹ MS. seene; M. fle

²² whereas

²³ MS. been

²⁴ nowadays

²⁵ therefore

it is tyme and skilful¹ to assayen to converten² þe puple by pley
and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyinge, and oþer maner myrþis. Also,
[5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten³ han; and bettere it is, or lesse
yuele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun⁴ by pleyinge of myraclis þan
5 by pleyinge of oþer[e] japis. Also, [6] siþen it is leueful⁵ to han þe
myraclis of God peyntid, why is [it] not as wel leueful to han þe
myraclis of God pleyid,⁶ syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille
of God, and his mervelous werkis, in þe pleyinge of hem þan in þe
peyntynge, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere
10 rehersed, by þe pleyinge of hem þan by þe peyntynge, for þis is a deed
bok, þe toper a qu[i]ck⁷?

To þe first reson we answeren,⁸ seying [1] þat siche myraclis-
pleyinge is not to þe worschipe of God, for þei ben don more to ben
seen of þe worlde, and to plesen⁹ to þe world, þanne to ben seen of
15 God, or to plesen⁹ to hym. As Crist never ensaumplide hem,¹⁰ but
onely heþene men, þat everemore dishonouren God, seyinge þat to þe
worschipe of God þat is to þe most veleynye¹¹ of hym; þerfore, as þe
wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyiþ to hemsilf¹² whanne
þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þeire maumetrie¹³ is to þe worschipe
20 of God, so mennus¹⁴ lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus
liiþ¹⁵ to hemsilf whanne þei seyn þat siche¹⁶ miraclis¹⁷-pleying[e] is to
þe worschip of God. . . .

[2] Þe same wise,¹⁸ myraclis-pleyinge, albeit þat it be synne, is
oþerewhile¹⁹ occasion of conuertynge of men; but as it is synne, it is
25 fer more occasion of pervertynge of men, not onely of oon synguler²⁰
persone, but of al an hool comynthe,²¹ as it makip al a puple to be
ocupied in veyn agenus þis heeste²² of þe Psauter Book, þat seiþ to
alle men, and namely to pristis, þat eche day reden it in þer servyse.
'Turne away myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees²³'; and ofte²⁴

¹ reasonable² MS. -yn³ must⁴ em. M.⁵ permissible⁶ MS. -ed⁷ living⁸ MS. -yng (em. M.)⁹ MS. -yn¹⁰ taught their use by example¹¹ degradation¹² deceive themselves; MS. þemsilf¹³ idols¹⁴ men's¹⁵ MS. lieþ¹⁶ MS. suche¹⁷ MS. -es¹⁸ in the same manner¹⁹ sometimes²⁰ single²¹ community²² command²³ Ps. 119. 37²⁴ again

'Lord, þou hatist¹ alle waytynge vanytees.²' How þanne may a prist pleyn in entirludies,³ or gyve hymself to þe sigt of hem? . . .

Myraclis-pleyinge, syþen it is aȝenus þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat þou shalt not take[n] Goddis name in ydil, it is aȝenus oure bileve, and so it may not gyven occasioun⁴ of turnyng men to þe bileve, but of pervertyng; and þerfore many men wenen⁵ þat þer is no helle of everelastyng peyne, but þat God do[i]þ but⁶ þreten⁷ us, and not to do[n] it in dede—as is⁸ pleyng of myraclis⁹ in sygne,¹⁰ and not in dede. . . .

A prist of þe Newe Testament, þat is passid þe tyme of childchod, and þat not onely shulde kepe[n] chastite, but alle opere vertues, ne onely mynystren þe sacrament of matrimonye, but alle opere sacramentis, and, namely,¹² syþen hym owiþ¹³ to mynystre[n] to alle þe puple þe precious body of Crist, awȝte¹⁴ to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleyng[c], boþe of myraclis and ellis.¹⁶ . . .

Þes men þat seyen, 'Pley[e] we a pley of Anticrist and of þe Day of Dome, þat sum man may be convertid þerby,' fallen into þe herisie of hem þat, reversyng þe Aposteyl, seyden: 'Do we yvel þingis, þat þer comen¹⁶ gode þingis'—'of whom,' as seiþ þe Aposteyl,¹⁷ 'dampnyng is rigtwise.'¹⁸

By þis we answeren to þe þridde¹⁹ resoun, seyinge [3] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge gyviþ²⁰ noon occasioun of verrey²¹ wepyng and medeful²²; but þe wepyng þat falliþ²³ to men and wymmen by þe sigte of siche myraclis-pleyinge, as it is²⁴ not principaly for þeire owne²⁵ synnes, ne of þeire gode feiþ wiþinneforþ,²⁶ but more of þeire sigt wiþouteforþ, is not allowable byfore God, but more reprovab²⁷; for²⁸ syþen Crist hymself reprovyde þe wymmen þat wepten upon hym in his passioun, myche more þei ben reprovab²⁸ þat wepen for

¹ MS. hatistde; M. hatid-est

² Ps. 31.6 (Vulg.)

³ interludes, plays; MS. entirlodies

⁴ MS. -cioun

⁵ believe

⁶ merely

⁷ MS. þretip

⁸ MS. ben

⁹ MS. mir-

¹⁰ symbolic

¹¹ nor

¹² especially

¹³ he ought

¹⁴ ought

¹⁵ other things

¹⁶ MS. -yn

¹⁷ MS. gospel (blurred) aposteyl

¹⁸ Rom. 3.8

¹⁹ third

²⁰ MS. -eþ

²¹ true, sincere; MS. werrey

²² profitable

²³ befalls

²⁴ MS. þei ben

²⁵ MS. ounce

²⁶ inwardly; MS. -forþe

²⁷ MS. reprovab²⁷

²⁸ MS. ffor

it is tyme and skilful¹ to assayen to converten² þe puple by pley and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyinge, and oþer maner myrþis. Also, [5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten³ han; and bettere it is, or lesse yvele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun⁴ by pleyinge of myraclis þan
 5 by pleyinge of oþer[e] japis. Also, [6] siþen it is leueful⁵ to han þe myraclis of God peyntid, why is [it] not as wel leueful to han þe myraclis of God pleyid,⁶ syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille of God, and his marvelous werkis, in þe pleyinge of hem þan in þe peyntyng, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere
 10 rehersid, by þe pleyinge of hem þan by þe peyntyng, for þis is a deed bok, þe toþer a qu[i]ck⁷?

To þe first reson we answeren,⁸ seying [1] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge is not to þe worschipe of God, for þei ben don more to ben seen of þe worlde, and to plesen⁹ to þe world, þanne to ben seen of
 15 God, or to plesen⁹ to hym. As Crist never ensaumplide hem,¹⁰ but onely heþene men, þat everemore dishonouren God, seyinge þat to þe worschipe of God þat is to þe most veleynye¹¹ of hym; þerfore, as þe wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyij to hemsilf¹² whanne
 þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þeire maumetrie¹³ is to þe worschipe
 20 of God, so mennus¹⁴ lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus, liij¹⁵ to hemsilf whanne þei seyn þat siche¹⁶ miraclis¹⁷-pleying[e] is to þe worschip of God. . . .

[2] Þe same wise,¹⁸ myraclis-pleyinge, albeit þat it be synne, is oþerewhile¹⁹ occasion of convertyng of men; but as it is synne, it is
 25 fer more occasion of pervertyng of men, not onely of oon synguler²⁰ persone, but of al an hool comynte,²¹ as it makij al a puple to ben ocupied in veyn azenus þis heeste²² of þe Psauter Book, þat seiþ to alle men, and namely to pristis, þat eche day reden it in þer servyse:
 'Turne away myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees²³'; and efte²⁴:

¹ reasonable² MS. -yn³ must⁴ em. M.⁵ permissible⁶ MS. -ed⁷ living⁸ MS. -yng (em. M.)⁹ MS. -yn¹⁰ taught their use by example¹¹ degradation¹² deceive themselves; MS. þemsilf¹³ idols¹⁴ men's¹⁵ MS. lieþ¹⁶ MS. suche¹⁷ MS. -es¹⁸ in the same manner¹⁹ sometimes²⁰ single²¹ community²² command²³ Ps. 119. 37²⁴ again

'Lord, þou hatist¹ alle waytynge vanytees.²' How þanne may a prist pley[n] in entirludies,³ or zyve hymself to þe sigt of hem? . . .

Myraclis-pleyinge, syþen it is agenys þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat þou shalt not take[n] Goddis name in ydil, it is agenys oure bileve, and so it may not zyven occasioun⁴ of turnyng men to þe bileve, 5 but of pertyng; and þerfore many men wenen⁵ þat þer is no helle of everelastyng peyne, but þat God do[i]þ but⁶ preten⁷ us, and not to do[n] it in dede—as is⁸ pleyng of myraclis⁹ in sygne,¹⁰ and not in dede. . . .

A prist of þe Newe Testament, þat is passid þe tyme of childehod, 10 and þat not onely shulde kepe[n] chastite, but alle oþere vertues, ne¹¹ onely mynystren þe sacrament of matrimonye, but alle oþere sacramentis, and, namely,¹² syþen hym owiþ¹³ to mynystre[n] to alle þe puple þe precious body of Crist, awȝte¹⁴ to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleyng[e], boþe of myraclis and ellis.¹⁵ . . . 15

Þes men þat seyen, 'Pley[e] we a pley of Anticrist and of þe Day of Dome, þat sum man may be convertid þerby,' fallen into þe herisie of hem þat, reversyng þe Aposteyl, seyden: 'Do we yvel þingis, þat þer comen¹⁶ gode þingis'—'of whom,' as seiþ þe Aposteyl,¹⁷ 'dampnyng is rigtwise.¹⁸' 20

By þis we answeren to þe þridde¹⁹ resoun, seyinge [3] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge zyviþ²⁰ noon occasioun of verrey²¹ wepyng and medeful²²; but þe wepyng þat falliþ²³ to men and wymmen by þe sigte of siche myraclis-pleyinge, as it is²⁴ not principaly for þeire owne²⁵ synnes, ne of þeire gode feiþ wiþinnesforþ,²⁶ but more of þeire 25 sigt wiþouteforþ, is not allowable byfore God, but more reprovab²⁷; for²⁸ syþen Crist hymself reprovyde þe wymmen þat wepten upon hym in his passioun, myche more þei ben reprovab²⁸ þat wepen for

¹ MS. hatistde; M. hatid-est

² Ps. 31. 6 (Vulg.)

³ interludes, plays; MS. entirlodies

⁴ MS. -cioun

⁵ believe

⁶ merely

⁷ MS. þretijþ

⁸ MS. ben

⁹ MS. mir-

¹⁰ symbolic

¹¹ nor

¹² especially

¹³ he ought

¹⁴ ought

¹⁵ other things

¹⁶ MS. -yn

¹⁷ MS. gospel (blurred) aposteyl

¹⁸ Rom. 3. 8

¹⁹ third

²⁰ MS. -eþ

²¹ true, sincere; MS. werrey

²² profitable

²³ befalls

²⁴ MS. þei ben

²⁵ MS. ounce

²⁶ inwardly; MS. -forþe

²⁷ MS. reprovab^{le}

²⁸ MS. ffor

it is tyme and skilful¹ to assayen to converten² þe puple by pley
and gamen — as by myraclis-pleyinge, and oþer maner myrþis. Also,
[5] summe recreac[i]oun men moten³ han; and bettere it is, or lesse
yvele, þat þei han þeyre recreac[i]oun⁴ by pleyinge of myraclis þan
5 by pleyinge of oþer[e] japis. Also, [6] siþen it is leueful⁵ to han þe
myraclis of God peyntid, why is [it] not as wel leueful to han þe
myraclis of God pleyid,⁶ syþen men mowen bettere reden þe wille
of God, and his mervelous werkis, in þe pleyinge of hem þan in þe
peyntynge, and betere þei ben holden in men[n]us mynde, and oftere
10 rehersid, by þe pleyinge of hem þan by þe peyntynge, for þis is a deed
bok, þe toþer a qu[i]ck⁷?

To þe first reson we answeren,⁸ seying [1] þat siche myraclis-
pleyinge is not to þe worschipe of God, for þei ben don more to ben
seen of þe worlde, and to plesen⁹ to þe world, þanne to ben seen of
15 God, or to plesen¹⁰ to hym. As Crist never ensaumplide hem,¹⁰ but
onely heþene men, þat everemore dishonouren God, seyinge þat to þe
worschipe of God þat is to þe most veleyne¹¹ of hym; þerfore, as þe
wickidnesse of þe misbileve of heþene men lyiþ to hemsilf¹² whanne
þei seyn þat þe wors[c]hipyng of þeire maumetrie¹³ is to þe worschipe
20 of God, so mennus¹⁴ lec[c]herye now on dayes, to han þer owne lustus,
liiþ¹⁵ to hemsilf whanne þei seyn þat siche¹⁶ miraclis¹⁷-pleying[e] is to
þe worschip of God. . . .

[2] Þe same wise,¹⁸ myraclis-pleyinge, albeit þat it be synne, is
operewhile¹⁹ occasion of convertyng of men; but as it is synne, it is
25 fer more occasion of pervertyng of men, not onely of oon synguler²⁰
persone, but of al an hool comynte,²¹ as it makij al a puple to ben
ocupied in veyn azenus þis heeste²² of þe Psauter Book, þat seiþ to
alle men, and namely to pristis, þat eche day reden it in þer servyse:
'Turne away myn eyen þat þei se[n] not vanytees²³'; and efte²⁴:

¹ reasonable² MS. -yn³ must⁴ em. M.⁵ permissible⁶ MS. -ed⁷ living⁸ MS. -yng (em. M.)⁹ MS. -yn¹⁰ taught their use by example¹¹ degradation¹² deceive themselves; MS. þemsilf¹³ idols¹⁴ men's¹⁵ MS. lieþ¹⁶ MS. suche¹⁷ MS. -es¹⁸ in the same manner¹⁹ sometimes²⁰ single²¹ community²² command²³ Ps. 119. 37²⁴ again

'Lord, þou hatist¹ alle waytynge vanytees.² How þanne may a prist pley[n] in entirludies,³ or gyve hymself to þe sigt of hem? . . .

Myraclis-pleyinge, syþen it is azenus þe heest of God, þat biddiþ þat þou shalt not take[n] Goddis name in ydil, it is azenus oure bileve; and so it may not gyven occasioun⁴ of turnyng men to þe bileve, but of pervertyng; and þerfore many men wenen⁵ þat þer is no heile of everelastyng peyne, but þat God do[i]þ but⁶ þreten⁷ us, and not to do[n] it in dede—as is⁸ pleyng of myraclis⁹ in sygne.¹⁰ and not in dede. . . .

A prist of þe Newe Testament, þat is passid þe tyme of childhod, and þat not onely shulde kepe[n] chastite, but alle oþere vertues, ne¹¹ onely mynystren þe sacrament of matrimonye, but alle oþere sacramentis, and, namely,¹² syþen hym owiþ¹³ to mynystre[n] to alle þe puple þe precious body of Crist, awgte¹⁴ to abstene[n] hym fro al ydil pleyng[e], boþe of myraclis and ellis.¹⁵ . . .

þes men þat seyen, 'Pley[e] we a pley of Anticrist and of þe Day of Dome, þat sum man may be convertid þerby,' fallen into þe herisie of hem þat, reversyng þe Aposteyl, seyden: 'Do we yvel þingis, þat þer comen¹⁶ gode þingis'—'of whom,' as seiþ þe Aposteyl,¹⁷ 'dampnyng is rigtwise.'¹⁸

By þis we answeren to þe þridde¹⁹ resoun, seyinge [3] þat siche myraclis-pleyinge gyviþ²⁰ noon occasioun of verrey²¹ wepyng and medeful²²; but þe wepyng þat falliþ²³ to men and wymmen by þe sigte of siche myraclis-pleyinge, as it is²⁴ not principaly for þeire owne²⁵ synnes, ne of þeire gode feiþ wipinneforþ,²⁶ but more of þeire sigt wipouteforþ, is not alowable byfore God, but more reprovab²⁷; for²⁸ syþen Crist hymself reprovyde þe wymmen þat wepten upon hym in his passioun, myche more þei ben reprovab²⁸ þat wepen for

¹ MS. hatistde; M. hatid-est

² Ps. 31.6 (Vulg.)

³ interludes, plays; MS. entirlodies

⁴ MS. -cioun

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²³ befalls

²⁴ MS. þei ben

²⁵ MS. oune

²⁶ inwardly; MS. -forþe

²⁷ MS. reprovab²⁷

²⁸ MS. ffor

þe pley of Cristis passioun, leevynge to wepen¹ for þe synnes of hemself
and of þeire chyldren, as Crist bad þe wymmen þat wepten on hym.²

And by þis we answeren to þe furþe resoun, seyinge [4] þat no
man may be convertid to God but onely by þe earnestful doynge³ of
5 God, and by noon veyn pleying[e]; for þat þat⁴ þe word of God
worship not, ne his sacramentis, how shulde pleyinge worchen, þat is
of no vertue, but ful of defeaute? . . . þe wepyng þat men wepen ofte
in sicke pley, comunely is fals, witnessinge⁵ þat þei loven⁶ more þe
lykyng⁷ of þeire body, and of prosperite of þe world, þan lykyng
10 of⁸ God, and prosperite of vertu[e] in þe soule; and, þerfore, hav-
yng more compassion of payne þan of synne, þei falsly wepen⁹ for
lakkynge of bodily prosperite, more þan for lakkynge of gostly.

And herby we answeren to þe fifte resoun, seyinge [5] þat verry
recreacion is leeveful ocupiynge in lasse¹⁰ werkis, to more ardently
15 worchen¹¹ grettere werkis; and þerfore sicke myraclis-pleyinge, ne
þe sigte of hem,¹² is no verrey recreacion,¹³ but fals and worldly, as
proven¹⁴ þe dedis of þe fautours¹⁵ of sicke pleyis. . . . And gif men
axen what recreac[i]oun men shulden han¹⁶ on þe haliday, after þeire
holy contemplacioun in þe chirche, we seyen to hem two þingis: oon
20 þat gif he hadde ver[r]yly ocupied¹⁷ hym in contemplac[i]oun byform
neyþer he wolde aske[n] þat question, ne han wille¹⁸ to se[n].¹⁹
vanyte; anopere, we seyn þat his recreacioun shulde ben in þe werkis
of mercy to his neyebore, and in delityng²⁰ hym in alle good comu-
nicacion wip his ney[e]bore, as biforn he delitid²¹ hym in God; and
25 in alle opere nedeful werkis þat reson and kynde²² axen.

And to þe last reson we seyn [6] þat peinture,²³ gif it²⁴ be verry
wipoute mengyng²⁵ of lesyngis,²⁶ and not to curious to²⁷ myche
fedyng mennus wittis, and not occasion of maumetrie²⁸ to þe puple
þei ben but as nakyd lettris to a clerk to reden²⁹ þe treuþe; but so

¹ omitting to weep

² Luke 23. 28

³ MS. doyinge

⁴ which

⁵ MS. falf wittnessenge

⁶ MS. -yn

⁷ pleasure, enjoyment

⁸ MS. in

⁹ MS. -yn

¹⁰ smaller

¹¹ MS. worschen

¹² (miracle-plays)

¹³ MS. -sion

¹⁴ MS. -yn

¹⁵ patrons

¹⁶ MS. have

¹⁷ MS. -ede

¹⁸ desire

¹⁹ see

²⁰ MS. di-

²¹ MS. di-

²² nature

²³ painting

²⁴ MS. gif it it

²⁵ mingling

²⁶ falsehoods

²⁷ intent upon

²⁸ idolatry

²⁹ MS. riden (em. M.)

ben not myraclis-pleyngis,¹ þat ben made more to deliten men bodily þan to ben bokis to lewid² men, and þerfore gif þei ben quike³ bookis, þei ben quike bookis to schrewidnesse,⁴ more þan to godnesse.⁵ Gode men, þerfore, seinge þer tyme to⁶ schort to occupyen hem in gode earnest werkis, and seinge þe day of þer rekenyng 5 neygen⁷ faste, and unknowyng whan þei schulen⁸ go[n] hennys, fleen alle siche ydilnessis, hyinge⁹ þat þei weren¹⁰ wijf þer¹¹ spouse, Crist, in þe blisse of hevene. . . .

[5]if þou haddist had¹² a fadir þat hadde suffrid¹³ a dispitous¹⁴ deþ to geten þee þyn heritage, and þou þerafter woldest so lightly ber[c]n¹⁵ 10 it, to make[n] þerof a pley to þe¹⁶ and to alle þe puple, no doute¹⁷ but þat alle gode men wolden demen¹⁸ þe unkynde. Miche more, God and alle his seyntis¹⁹ demen¹⁸ alle þo²⁰ Cristen men unkynde þat pleyen or favouren þe pley of þe deþ or of þe myraclis²¹ of þer most kynde Fadir, Crist, þat dyede and wrougte myraclis to bryngen men to þe evere- 15 lastande heretage of hevene.

But peraventure heere þou seist þat, [3]if²² pleyinge of myraclis be synne, never þe latere²³ it is but litil synne. But herfore,²⁴ dere frend, knowe ȝee þat eche synne, be it never so litil, [3]if it be mayntenyd and prechid as gode and profitable, is deadly²⁵ synne; 20 and þerfore seiþ þe prophete²⁶: 'Wo to hem þat seien good²⁷ yvel, and yvel good²⁸!' and þerfore þe wyse man dampniþ²⁹ hem þat gladen³⁰ whan þei don yvel; and þerfore alle seyntis seyen þat mannysch³¹ it is to fallen, but develiche it is to abyden stille þerinne. Þerfore, siþen þis³² myraclis-pleyinge is synne, as þou knowl- 25 echist,³³ and is stedefastly meyntenyd, and also men deliten hem þerinne, no doute¹⁷ but þat it is deadly synne, dampnable — develiche, not mannysch. . . .

1 MS. -inge

2 ignorant, unlearned

3 living

4 wickedness; MS. -ide-

5 MS. gode-

6 too

7 draw near

8 MS. schal

9 hastening

10 might be

11 MS. her

12 MS. hadde

13 MS. -ed

14 cruel; MS. -ouse

15 so disregard

16 for thyself

17 MS. dowte

18 MS. denyen

19 MS. -es

20 those

21 MS. -es

22 MS. of

23 nevertheless

24 in consideration of this

25 MS. deadely

26 MS. -ite

27 MS. gode

28 Isa. 5. 20

29 condemneth; MS. -eþ

30 rejoice

31 human; MS. -ysche

32 MS. þes

33 dost acknowledge

- As þis is a verre lesynge to seyen þat for þe love of God he w
 ben a good felawe¹ wip þe devul, so it is a verrey² lesyng to seye
 þat for þe love of God he wil pleyen his myraclis --- for in neyþer
 þe love of God schewid, but his hestis tobroken.³ And syþen þe cer
 5 monyes⁴ of þe olde lawe — albeit þat þei weren gyven bi God — for
 þei weren fleyschly, shulden⁵ not be[n] holde[n]⁶ wip þe Newe Test
 ment, for it is gostly⁷; myche more pleyinge, for it is fleys[h]
 never beden⁸ of God, shulde not ben don wip þe mervelouse werk
 of God, for þei ben gostly; for as þe pleyinge⁹ of Ismael wip Isaac
 10 shulde han¹⁰ bynomen¹¹ Isaac his heretage, so¹² þe kepyng of þe cer
 monyes⁴ of þe olde lawe in þe Newe Testament shulde han bynome
 men þer bileve in Crist, and han made men to gon backward — þat
 to seie[n], fro þe gostly lyvyng of þe Newe Testament to þe fleyschly
 lyvyng of þe Olde Testament. . . .
- 15 þis myraclis-pleyinge is verre witesse¹³ of mennus averice and
 coveytise byfore, þat is maumetrie, as seiþ þe Apostele¹⁴; for þat þat
 þei shulden spenden¹⁵ upon þe nedis of þer negebors, þei spenden upon
 þe pleyis; and to peyen þer rente and þer dette þei wolen grucche[n],
 and to spende[n] two so myche¹⁶ upon þer pley þei wolen noþing
 20 grucchen. Also, to gaderen¹⁷ men togidere to bien þe derre þe
 vetailis,¹⁸ and to stiren men to glotonye, and to pride and boost,²¹ þe
 pleyn þes myraclis; and, also, to han wherof to spenden on þe
 myraclis, and to holde[n] felawschipe of glotonye and lec[c]herie
 sicke²² dayes of myraclis-pleyinge, þei bisien hem befor to mo
 25 gredily bygilen þer nez[e]bors in byinge and in sellyng; and so þe
 pleyinge of myraclis now on dayes is verre²³ witesse of hidous
 coveytise, þat is maumetrie.

¹ MS. felowe² MS. werry³ MS. -un⁴ MS. sery-⁵ MS. þei shulden⁶ ranked⁷ of the spirit⁸ bidden; MS. -yn⁹ Gen. 21. 9 (*judentem*, Vulgate; see the Authorized Version)¹⁰ might have¹¹ taken from; MS. -yn¹² MS. so in þe¹³ MS. witt-¹⁴ Col. 3. 5¹⁵ which¹⁶ MS. -yn¹⁷ grudge¹⁸ twice as much¹⁹ MS. gideren²⁰ buy their food the dear²¹ boasting²² MS. sicse²³ MS. werre²⁴ MS. hidoous

MIRK, INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARISH PRIESTS

The *Instructions for Parish Priests* is a versified translation of the *Pupilla Oculi* of William de Pagula (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mirk). Its author, who was prior of Lilleshall in Shropshire, wrote also, besides a Latin *Manuale Sacerdotum*, the *Liber Festialis*, an English book of sermons which was decidedly popular, being printed eighteen times between 1483 and 1532 (Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 395). Nothing more is known of Mirk's life; the date 1403 as the time at which he flourished is conjectural.

The following selections are from Peacock's print (E.E.T.S. 31, London, 1868; revised, 1902) of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Claud. A. 2, which he supposes to be not later than 1450, and to represent the language of an earlier time. The pages are respectively, with the exception of the third from the end, 2, 9-10, 14, 32, 43, 66-7, and 60, of the edition of 1902; the antepenultimate, 21-3 of the edition of 1868.

THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST

Preste, þyself thow moste be chast,
 And say þy serves wyþowten hast,
 That mowthe and herte acorden ifere,¹
 Ȝef thow wole that God þe here.
 Of honde² and mowþe þou moste be trewe, 5
 And grete oþes thow moste enchewe³;
 In worde and dede þou moste be mylde,
 Bothe to mon and to chylde.
 Dronkelec⁴ and glotonye,
 Pruyde and slouþe and envye, 10
 Alle þow moste putten away,
 Ȝef þow wolt serve God to pay.⁴
 That þe nedeth, etc and drynke,
 But sle⁵ þy lust for any thyng.
 Tavernes also thow moste forsake, 15
 And marchaundyse þow schalt not make;
 Wrastelynge, and schotyngc,⁶ and suche maner game,⁷

¹ agree (*lit.* accord together)

² eschew

³ drunkenness

⁴ please

⁵ slay, crush

⁶ shooting

⁷ sports of such sort

Thow mygte not use¹ wythowte blame;
 Hawkyng, huntynge, and dawnsynge,
 Thow moste forgo for any thyng;
 Cuttede² clothes and pykede³ schone,
 5 Thye gode fame þey wole fordone.⁴
 Marketes and feyres I the forbede,
 But⁵ hyt be for the more⁶ nede.
 In honeste⁷ clothes thow moste gon:
 Baselarde⁸ ny bawdryke⁹ were þow non.
 10 Berde and crowne thow moste be schave;
 Ȝef thow wole thy ordere save.
 Of mete and drynke þow moste be fre¹⁰
 To pore and ryche, by¹¹ thy degre.
 Ȝerne¹² thow moste thy Sawtere¹³ rede,
 15 And of the Day of Dome have drede;
 And evere do gode ageynes¹⁴ evele,
 Or elles thow mygte not lyve wele.

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

No non in chyrche stonde schal,
 Ny¹⁵ lene to pyler ny to wal,
 20 But fayre¹⁶ on kneus þey schule hem sette —
 Knelynge down upon the flette¹⁷ —
 And pray to God wyth herte meke
 To geve hem grace, and mercy eke.
 Soffere hem to make no bere,¹⁸
 25 But ay to be in here¹⁹ prayere;

¹ practise
² cut short (?)
³ long-toed
⁴ make way with
⁵ unless
⁶ greater
⁷ decent, simple

⁸ short sword, dagger
⁹ sword-belt
¹⁰ generous
¹¹ according to
¹² earnestly, zealously
¹³ Psalter

¹⁴ in return for
¹⁵ nor
¹⁶ properly
¹⁷ floor
¹⁸ noise
¹⁹ their

4. pykede: 'The pikes were sometimes made like the tails of scorpions, at others twisted into the form of a ram's horn' (Peacock's note, ed. 1902, p. 73).

And whenne þe gospels ired¹ be schalle,
 Teche hem þenne to stonde up alle,
 And blesse² feyre as þey conne
 Whenne 'Gloria tibi'³ ys bygonne.
 And whenne þe Gospel ys idone, 5
 Teche hem eft to knele downe sone;
 And whenne they here the belle ryng
 To that holy sakerynge,⁴
 Teche hem knele downe, boþe zonge and olde,
 And boþe here hondes up to holde, 10
 And say þenne in þys manere,
 Feyre and softly, wythowte bere:
 'Jesu, Lord, welcome þow be,
 In forme of bred as I þe se.
 Jesu, for thy holy name, 15
 Schelde me to-day fro synne and schame.
 Schryfte⁵ and howsele,⁶ Lord, þou graunte me bo,⁷
 Er that I schale hennes go,
 And verre⁸ contrycyone of my synne,
 That I, Lord, never dye thereinne; 20
 And, as þow were of a may⁹ ibore,¹⁰
 Sofere¹¹ me never to be forlore,¹²
 But whenne þat I schale hennes wende,
 Grawnte me þe blysse wythowten ende.'

THE CREED

I beleve in oure holy Drygt,¹³ 25
 Fader of hevene, God almygt,
 þat alle thynges has wrogt —
 Hevene and erþe, and alle of nogt.
 On Jesu Cryst I beleve also,

¹ read² make the sign of the cross
³ 'Glory be to thee, O God,'
 sung between the Epistle
 and the Gospel
⁴ consecration of the elements⁵ confession and absolution⁶ receiving of the Eucharist⁷ both⁸ true⁹ maiden¹⁰ born¹¹ suffer¹² lost¹³ Lord

Thow mygte not use¹ wythowte blame;
 Hawkyng, huntynge, and dawnsynge,
 Thow moste forgo for any thyng;
 Cuttede² clothes and pykede³ schone,
 5 Thye gode fame þey wole-fordone.⁴
 Marketes and feyres I the forbede,
 But⁵ hyt be for the more⁶ nede.
 In honeste⁷ clothes thow moste gon:
 Baselarde⁸ ny bawdryke⁹ were þow non.
 10 Berde and crowne thow moste be schave,
 Ȝef thow wole thy ordere save.
 Of mete and drynke þow moste be fre¹⁰
 To pore and ryche, by¹¹ thy degre.
 Ȝerne¹² thow moste thy Sawtere¹³ rede,
 15 And of the Day of Dome have drede;
 And evere do gode ageynes¹⁴ evele,
 Or elles thow mygte not lyve wele.

BEHAVIOR IN CHURCH

No non in chyrche stonde schal,
 Ny¹⁵ lene to pyler ny to wal,
 20 But fayre¹⁶ on kneus þey schule hem sette—
 Knelynge down upon the flette¹⁷—
 And pray to God wyth herte meke
 To geve hem grace, and mercy eke.
 Soffere hem to make no bere,¹⁸
 25 But ay to be in here¹⁹ prayere;

¹ practise
² cut short (?)
³ long-toed
⁴ make way with
⁵ unless
⁶ greater
⁷ decent, simple

⁸ short sword, dagger
⁹ sword-belt
¹⁰ generous
¹¹ according to
¹² earnestly, zealously
¹³ Psalter

¹⁴ in return for
¹⁵ nor
¹⁶ properly
¹⁷ floor
¹⁸ noise
¹⁹ their

4. pykede: 'The pikes were sometimes made like the tails of scorpions, at others twisted into the form of a ram's horn' (Peacock's note, ed. 1902, p. 73).

And whenne þe gospelle ired ¹ be schalle,
 Teche hem þenne to stonde up alle,
 And blesse ² feyre as þey conne
 Whenne 'Gloria tibi' ³ ys bygonne.
 And whenne þe Gospel ys idone,
 Teche hem eft to knele downe sone;
 And whenne they here the belle ryng
 To that holy sakerynge,⁴
 Teche hem knele downe; boþe zonge and olde,
 And boþe here hondes up to holde,
 And say þenne in þys manere,
 Feyre and softely, wythowte bere:
 'Jesu, Lord, welcome þow be,
 In forme of bred as I þe se.
 Jesu, for thy holy name,
 Schelde me to-day fro synne and schame.
 Schryfte ⁵ and howsele,⁶ Lord, þou graunte me bo,⁷
 Er that I schale hennes go,
 And verre ⁸ contrycyone of my synne,
 That I, Lord, never dye thereinne;
 And, as þow were of a may ⁹ ibore,¹⁰
 Sofere ¹¹ me never to be forlore,¹²
 But whenne þat I schale hennes wende,
 Grawnte me þe blysse wythowten ende.'

THE CREED

I beleve in oure holy Drygt,¹³
 Fader of hevene, God almygt,
 þat alle thyng has wrogt —
 Hevene and erþe, and alle of noȝt.
 On Jesu Cryst I beleve also,

¹ read
² make the sign of the cross
³ 'Glory be to thee, O God,'
 sung between the Epistle
 and the Gospel

⁴ consecration of the elements
⁵ confession and absolution
⁶ receiving of the Eucharist
⁷ both
⁸ true

⁹ maiden
¹⁰ born
¹¹ suffer
¹² lost
¹³ Lord

Hys only Sone, and no mo,
 þat was conceyvede of þe Holy Spyryt,
 And of a mayde ibore quyt¹;
 And afterward under Pounce Pylate
 Was itake² for vye³ and hate,
 And soffrede peyne and passyone,
 And on þe croys was idone⁴;
 Ded and buried he was also,
 And wente to helle to spoyle⁵ oure fo,
 And ros to lyve the þryde day,
 And stegh⁶ to hevene þe xl day.
 Ȝet he schale come wyþ woundes rede,
 To deme⁷ þe quyke and þe dede.
 In þe Holy Gost I leve⁸ welle;
 In Holy Chyrche and hyre spelle.⁹
 In Goddes body I beleve nowe,
 Amonge hys seyntes to ȝeve me rowe,¹⁰
 And of my synnes þat I have done
 To have plenere¹¹ remyssyone;
 And when my body from deth schal ryse
 I leve to be wyth God and hyse,¹²
 And have the joye þat lasteþ ay;
 God graunte hymself þat I so may!

THE VANITIES OF THE FLESH

Hast þou ben prowde and glad in thoght
 Of any mysdede þat þou hast wroȝt?
 Hast þou ben prowde of any gyse¹³
 Of any þynge þat þou dedust use,
 Of party¹⁴ hosen, of pykede schone,
 Of fytered¹⁵ clopes (as foles done)

1 quite
 2 seized
 3 envy
 4 done to death
 5 despoil

6 ascended
 7 judge
 8 believe
 9 teaching
 10 rest

11 full, complete
 12 his
 13 appearance, look
 14 party-colored

Of londes rentes, of gay howsynge,¹
 Of mony servauntes to þy byddyngē,
 Or of hors fat and rownde,
 Or for þy godes² were hole and sownde,
 Or for þow art gret and ryche 5
 Þat no neȝbore ys þe ilyche,³
 Or for þow art a vertues mon,
 And const⁴ more þen anoþer con?
 Ȝef þou have be⁵ on þys maner prowð,
 Schryf⁶ þe, sone, and telle hyt out. 10

SINS OF CARELESSNESS

Hast þow icome by chyrchezorde,⁷
 And for þe dede iprayed no worde?
 Hast þow ay cast up⁸ lydeȝate⁹
 Þere bestus have go in ate?
 Hast þow istrueyd¹⁰ corn or gras, 15
 Or oþer þynge þat sowen was?
 Hast þou icome in any sty,¹¹
 And cropped ȝerus¹² of corne þe by?
 Art þou iwont over corn to ryde,
 When þou myȝtest have go bysyde? 20

THE PRONOUNCING OF EXCOMMUNICATION

Þe grete sentens I wryte þe here,
 Þat foure tymes in þe ȝere
 Þou schalte pronownce withowtyn lette,¹³
 Whan þe parich is toȝyður mette.
 Þou schalte pronownce þis hydowse þinge 25
 Wit cros, and candul, and belle-knyllynge,¹⁴

¹ trappings
² goods, possessions
³ like
⁴ knowest
⁵ been
⁶ shrive, confess

⁷ past a churchyard
⁸ fastened up (so as to prevent
 the entrance of cattle)
⁹ gate between pasture-land
 and ploughed land
¹⁰ destroyed

¹¹ path
¹² cars
¹³ hindrance
¹⁴ tolling

þe furste Sononday affter Myghellfeste¹;
 Myd-Lenton² Sonday schal be neste³;
 þe Trenite feste is þe pridde, os⁴ I þe say;
 þe ferthe is þe Sononday aftur Candulmes day.
 5 Spelle⁵ hit reddely,⁶ for nogte þou wonde,⁷
 þat⁸ alle men þe undurstonde.

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (I)

By auttorite of God almigti, Fader⁹ and Son and Holy Gost, and of
 al þe seyntes of heven. First,¹⁰ we accursen al them that broken¹¹ the
 pece of Holy Chirch or sturben hit; . . . all þat falsen or use false
 10 measures, busshelles, galones, and potelles,¹² quartes, [cuppes], or false
 wightes, poundes or poundrelles,¹³ or false ellenyerdes,¹⁴ wetyngly oþer
 þan þe lawe of þe lond woll; . . . also all þat distroubleth þe pes of
 Englund, and traitors that ben false or isenting¹⁵ to falsenes, agen þe
 king or the reame¹⁶; . . . also all that helpen with strength, or with vit-
 15 ayles, or soccuren Jewes or Sarzons¹⁷ agen Cristendom; also all þat
 sleen childeren, or distroyen boren or unborn, with drynkes or with
 wichcraft, and all her consentes¹⁸; also all þat stondeth or herkeneth
 by nygtes under wolles, dores, or wyndowes, for to spy touching evil,
 and all house-brekeres and man-quellers.¹⁹ . . .

FORM OF EXCOMMUNICATION (II)

20 By þe auctorite of oure Fadur, of þe Sone, of þe Holy Goste, and off
 ou[r]e lady Seynte Mary, Goddus modur of heven, and alle oþur vir-
 gynes, and Seynte Myhel,²⁰ and alle oþur angellus and archangellus, and
 Petur and Poule, and oþur apostolus, and Seynte Stewne,²¹ and alle oþur
 martyres, and Seynte Nicholas, and alle oþur confessoures,²² and alle

¹ Michaelmas² Mid-Lenten³ next⁴ as⁵ speak, say; MS. sepelle⁶ promptly, willingly⁷ shrink, fear⁸ so that⁹ MS. ffader¹⁰ MS. ffirst¹¹ break¹² a measure for liquids, equal
to half a gallon¹³ scales, balances¹⁴ ell-measures¹⁵ consenting¹⁶ realm¹⁷ Saracens¹⁸ accomplices¹⁹ murderers²⁰ Michael²¹ Stephen²² those who suffered perse-
cution, but not martyr-
dom, for the sake of their
religion

þe holy halowes¹ of hewen, we acurson and waryon² and departon³
 from alle gode dedus and prayeres of Holy Chyrche, and dampnon⁴
 into þe peyne of helle, alle þoo⁵ þat have done þeis articoles þat we
 have sayde before, tyl⁶ þei comen to amendemente. We acurson hem
 be þe auctorite off þe courete off Rome, witinne- and witouteforȝþe,⁷ 5
 sclepyng and wakyng, goyng, syttyng and standinge, lyggynge,
 ofbowne⁸ þe erthe and undur þe erthe, . . . in wode, in watur, in felde,
 and in towne. We acurson be þe Fadur and Sone and Holy Goste.
 Acursyn hem angelus and archangellus, and alle þe nyne ordorus of
 heven. Acursyn hem patriarchus, prophetus, and apostolus, and alle 10
 Goddus disciplus, and alle holy innocentus, martyres, confessoures, and
 virgynes, monkus, cannonus, eremytus,⁹ and prestus and clerkus, þat
 þei have no parte off masses ne mateynus¹⁰ ne evensonge, ne of none
 oþur gode prayeres þat bene done in Holy Chyrche, no in none oþur
 holy place; bot þe peynus of helle for to be here mede,¹¹ wit Judas þat 15
 betrayed oure Lord Jesu Cryste, and þe lyf of hem be putte oute of þe
 bokus of lyfe, tyl þay comen to amendemente, and satisfaccion made.
 Fiat, fiat! Amen!

þan þou þi candul kaste to grownde,
 Ande spytte¹² þerto þe same stownde,¹³ 20
 And lette also þe belle knylle,
 To make hertus þe more grylle.¹⁴

THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

'Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that no literary production since the time of the apostles has contributed so much to Western civilization as the Benedictine Rule; and yet its author probably never regarded it as a literary production at all' (Cook and Tinker, *Sel. Trans. from Old Eng. Prose*, p. 278).

Benedict was born at the end of the fifth century; by the end of the sixth his Rule was chosen by Pope Gregory the Great for a monastery Gregory had founded at Rome. By the end of the eighth century — the age of Charlemagne

¹ saints² execrate³ separate, shut off⁴ condemn⁵ those⁶ MS. tul⁷ at home and abroad⁸ above⁹ hermits, recluses¹⁰ matins¹¹ reward¹² spit¹³ at the same time¹⁴ (to) shudder, tremble

the Rule was almost universally followed in European monasteries. Throughout the Middle Ages the Benedictine monks were famous for their learning, and, by their zeal in copying classical manuscripts, preserved most of those that have come down to us. For a general account of them, see Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, Book 4.

The early English manuscripts of the Rule are many of them based on a version written for nuns. That from which our selections are taken is MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Vespasian A. 25, in the Northern dialect of the earlier fifteenth century, as printed by Kock (E.E.T.S. 120), the respective pages being 95-6, 99-100, 102-5, 115-6.

THE HOURS FOR MEALS

Of time of mete now es to lere,
 In times and sesons of þe zere.
 Fro Pas¹ right unto Witsunnday,
 At þe sext our² ete sal þai,
 5 þe whilk es midday for to mene,
 And sine³ sal þai soupe⁴ bedene.⁵
 In somer, fro⁶ Witsunday be past,
 Wednesday and Friday sal þai fast,
 Bot-if⁷ þai oper⁸ swink⁹ or swete
 10 In hay or corn with travel grete.
 And if þai non slike¹⁰ travel done,¹¹
 On þos days sal þai fast to none.¹²
 And on oper days, als I air¹³ saide,
 At mydday sal þer mete be graide.¹⁴
 15 Bot al þis sal be purued¹⁵ playn,
 At þe ordinance of þer soverayn¹⁶;
 What seson so¹⁷ scho¹⁸ putes þam t
 Withoutin groching¹⁹ sal þai do.
 Fro time þat December begin
 20 Until clene Lentyn cum in,

1 Easter
 2 sixth hour
 3 afterwards
 4 sup
 5 together
 6 from the time that
 7 unless

8 either
 9 labor
 10 such
 11 do, engage in
 12 noon
 13 before
 14 ready, prepared

15 provide
 16 prioress, superior
 17 whatsoever manner of life
 according to the season
 18 she
 19 grumbling

At hi¹ none sal þai ete;
 þer lesons² sal þai not forgete.
 In Lentyn sal non to mete gang
 Efter³ þe our of evynsang;
 And al servys⁴ þan sal þai sai
 Efter mete, bi light of day,
 So þat al be rewlid right
 At wend⁵ to bede bi dais lyght.

5

DAILY OCCUPATIONS

All þat wons in religioun⁶
 Aw⁷ to have sum ocupacioun,
 Ouper⁸ in kirk of⁹ hali bedes¹⁰
 Or stodying in oder stedes.¹¹
 For ydilnes, os sais Sant Paul,
 Es grete enmy unto þe saul;
 And þerfor es ordand¹² þat þai
 Sum gude warkes sal wirk alway,
 And sum certane times of þe ȝer
 To wirk with hand, os men may her.
 Fro Pase, thurgh al Cristyndome,
 Til þe kalandes¹³ of October cum,
 Unto prime¹⁴ sone sal þai rise,
 And sine ilkon¹⁵ wirk on þer wise
 What so es most nedeful labore,
 Until þe tyme of þe third oure.
 And lessons sal þai rede þan next
 Fro þe third our unto þe sext.
 And efterward thurgh wirchep
 Fro oures¹⁶ and mes¹⁷ wend unto mete.

10

15

20

25

¹ high
² readings
³ MS. or efter
⁴ the whole service
⁵ to go
⁶ dwell in religion, lead
 a religious life

⁷ ought
⁸ either
⁹ with
¹⁰ prayers
¹¹ other places
¹² ordained
¹³ first

¹⁴ church-service celebrated
 about 5 or 6 A.M.
¹⁵ each one
¹⁶ hours of service
¹⁷ mass

And efter mete, þen sal þai slepe.
 And silence al samen¹ sal þai kepe,
 So þat none do oþer diseſe,²
 Bot ilkon paid³ oþer to pleſe.
 5 Sone efterward, when þis es done,
 And þai haf said þe our of none,
 Until þeir werk þen sal þai gang,
 Unto þe tyme of evynsang,
 To ſcher⁴ or bind, if it be nede,
 10 Or dike,⁵ or els do oþer dede,
 For unto travel wor we born,
 And al our elders us befor.
 Bot travel aw meſurd to be
 Til ilkon efter þer degre,
 15 To men or women, old or ȝing,
 Ilkon to do divers þing.
 Fro October, os I are⁶ ſayd,
 Unto Lentyn es þus purvayd⁷:
 In orisons, and in þer oures
 20 And lessons, sal be þer laboures.

LENTEN OBSERVANCE

In Lentyn tyme þen sal þai riſe
 Arly, and ſay þer ſervyſe
 And orisons til Godes honoure,
 Until it be paſt þe third oure.
 25 þan to þe tent our⁸ sal þai wirk,
 And ſine til non⁹ ſerve in þe kirk.
 And in Lentyn aw þam to luke¹⁰
 þat ilkon have ordand a buke,
 Whilk sal be red right to þe end,
 30 Als þe cours of þe rewl haſe kend.¹¹

¹ together² diſcomfort, diſturbance³ content⁴ cut, reap⁵ make ditches⁶ before⁷ provided for⁸ tenth hour⁹ not¹⁰ ſee¹¹ tau

And who so groches oght here ogayn¹
 Sal be punest with grevus payne.
 Who tentes to trofils,² and wil not rede,
 And þai overtayn³ with þat dede,
 With payn þai sal amendes make,
 So þat oþer ensaumpil take.

5

THE ENTERTAINMENT OF GUESTS

A priores aw to be prest⁴
 For to resave ilka gude gest,
 And at hir myght þam mere⁵ make
 Soveraynly for Godes sake,
 Namely⁶ þam þat er⁷ pilgrams knawn,
 And pouer⁸ þat hase⁹ not of þer awn.
 For God until [us] þus sal say
 In dome,¹⁰ apon þe dredful day :
Hospes cram, et colligistis me —
 'I was a gest in my degre,
 And in ȝour hous ȝe herberd me.'
 þan aw us¹¹ gestes and gud pilgrims
 For to releve in al þere lims,
 And for to refresch in al right,
 Als it es det¹² be day and nyght,
 And oblis¹³ þam kissink¹⁴ of pese,
 Perfite luf for to encres.
 And when þai cum, bi day or nyght,
 And also when þai wend to flight,
 Loute¹⁵ unto þam aw¹⁶ grete and small,
 Or els unto þer fete at¹⁷ fall,
 Witand¹⁸ wele in þat sesounc
 þai honour Crist in þer persoun;

10

15

25

¹ against this
² attends to trifles
³ if they are found out
⁴ ready, eager
⁵ merry
⁶ especially

⁷ are
⁸ poor people
⁹ have
¹⁰ judgment
¹¹ it befits us, we ought
¹² due

¹³ courteously give
¹⁴ kiss
¹⁵ to bow
¹⁶ ought
¹⁷ to
¹⁸ knowing

For who so resaves þe pure man
In Crist name, resaves Crist þan.

A soveraryn¹ sal ger gastes kepe²
With honour and with gret wirchepe,
Or rede to þam, or ger be rede,
How hali men þer lives lede. . . .
Scho sal gif water unto þer hend,
And wesch þeir fete, als Crist hase kend.

When þai so do, þai sal reherce,
Word bi word, and say þis verce :

Suscepimus, Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio

'We have resavyd, Lord, þi mercy,
In þe mydes of þe hows haly.' . . .

þe gastes kechin⁴ sal be set
Allone, pat it no noþer⁵ let,
So þat þai be servyd at ese,
And ilk man redy þam to plesse.
And luk þer bedes⁶ ordand bene
With litter larch⁷ and clothes clene,
And swilk servandes assigned þam til
þat wil þam serve with gude wil.
None aw þam do for to greve,
Ne speke with þam withoutyn leve,
Bot loutand⁸ hals⁹ þam wher þai go,
And with blissing pase furth þam fro.

THE NUN'S CLOTHING

Thay sal be cledde ful wele, we wate,
Efter þer place es cald or hate.
For in cald stedes¹⁰ who so er sted,¹¹
þam nedes for to be better cled;
And¹² who er in hate cuntre,

¹ prioress

² cause guests to be entertained

³ taught

⁴ kitchen

⁵ other

⁶ beds

⁷ large straw-bed

⁸ bowing

⁹ salute

¹⁰ places

¹¹ situated

¹² MS. in

Sich clething to þam may be;
 And al it sal be purvayd playne
 At þe ordinance of þeir soverayne.
 In comun places for alkins note¹
 Sufficis a kirtil² and a cote³; 5
 And mantels sal þai have certayne,
 In winter dubil, in somer playne;
 And changing kirtils sal þai have
 In nyghtes þer oþer for to save.
 Schos þai sall have, whor þai dwel, 10
 Swilk os þai may find for to sel.⁴
 Of þe farest⁵ þai sal not by,
 Bot þe vilist ful bowsumly.⁶
 And þeir soverayn aw for to se
 Þat þair gere⁷ evynly o[r]dand⁸ be, 15
 Mete for þam þat sal it fang,⁹
 And noþer to schort ne to lang.
 When þai tak new, þe old sal þen
 Be partid til¹⁰ pouer women.
 And when þai sal went¹¹ in cuntre, 20
 Þair clething sal mor honest¹² be;
 And home agayn when þai cum eft,
 Þen sal þai were slik os¹³ þai left.
 Until þeir beddyng sal þai have
 At¹⁴ suffise þam fro cauld to save. 25
 And ofsithes sall þer bed be sene,
 Þat no trespere be þam betwene,
 Ne no gude þat to þam may gayne¹⁵;
 Who so it hase, sall soffer payne.
 For whi¹⁶ þer soverayn sal þam bede¹⁷ 30
 All unto þam þat es nede.

¹ all kinds of work² gown³ skirt, petticoat⁴ for sale⁵ fairest⁶ meekly⁷ apparel⁸ fitly ordered; em. K.⁹ receive¹⁰ distributed to¹¹ go¹² finer¹³ such as¹⁴ (enough) to¹⁵ be useful¹⁶ wherefore¹⁷ offer, give them

RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC

THE PORTER

Ane old man sal þe gates gеме
 þat witti es, and wele wil seme²
 For to welcum with wordes fre
 Evyrilk man in þer degre.
 His dwelling sal be dyght³ algayte⁴
 In a cel beside þe gate,
 So þat he be redy ay
 Til al⁵ þat cums be nyght or day.
 And when so ony knok or call,
 Softli answer þam he sall;
 To her þer wordes sal he be bayn,⁶
 And bryng þam grath⁷ answer ogayn.
 And baynly sal he bryng and take
 Al þat men sendes for Godes sake.
 And ever him aw to gеме þe gate
 For al aventurs,⁸ arely and layte.
 In abbais aw to be al thing
 þat nedeful es to þeir lifing,
 Als watter for to do al þer dedis,
 Miln,⁹ kiln,¹⁰ and oven, and al þat nedis,
 So þat þai sal not outward gang
 To say, for dred, or wirk, oght wrang.

ROBERT MANNYNG OF BRUNNE, HANDLING SIN

Robert Mannyng of Brunne (now Bourne), in Lincolnshire, wrote his poem the *Handlyng Synne*, in 1303, when he had for fifteen years belonged to the priory of Gilbertine canons at Sempringham (six miles from Bourne). His work is a poetical adaptation of the *Manuel des Pechiez* of William of Waddington, who wrote some time in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). While characterizing the seven deadly sins, etc., it pictures in a lively way the life and vices of the age, and inserts tales here and there to point a moral. The poet

1 keep
 2 be suitable
 3 prepared
 4 always

5 for all
 6 ready
 7 direct
 8 with reference to all contingencies

9 mill
 10 baker

has been spoken of as 'the work which more than any former one foreshadowed the path that English literature was to tread from that time forward' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Mannyng); and, in general, it has been more popular than the writer's other chief work, a chronicle-history of England. Of Mannyng's language Ten Brink says (*Early English Literature* 1. 302): 'Robert of Brunne is without doubt one of the writers who served most to spread the East-Midland dialect toward the south. And through him many new Romanic words were probably either introduced into the English literary language, or at least established there.'

With the caution in 303 10 ff. may be compared the following (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15. 59):

A man that intendency to mynstrels shall soone be weddyd to poverté. . . .
 Iff mynstrels plesce the, feyne as thou herde them, but thyneke uppone another.
 He that lawith [laughs] at a mynstrels worde geueth to hym a wedde [forfeit, pledge].

Our selections are from E.E.T.S. 119 and 123, which print the version of this poem (12,630 lines long) in MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1701; and, in parallel columns, the corresponding parts of Wadington's Old French. The selections are, respectively, lines 985-1054, 4571-4614, 4739-4774, 8987-9006, 10,729-10,798.

THE PROPER WAY OF KEEPING HOLY DAYS

Ȝyf þou make karol¹ or play,
 þou halewyst nat þyn halyday.
 Ȝyf þou come overgladly partyl,²
 And ȝyvest þarto mochyl³ þy wyl,
 Yn þat hast þou mochyl plyȝt,⁴ 5
 For synne wyl come þurgh swyche syȝt.
 Ȝyf þou ever settyst swerde eyþer ryng
 For to gadyr a wrastlyng,
 Þe halyday þou holdest noght,
 Whan swyche bobaunce⁵ for þe ys wroȝt: 10
 Cuntek⁶ þere comyþ, or ouþer bobaunce,
 And sum man slayn, or lost þurȝe chaunce.
 Ȝyf þou ever yn felde, eyþer⁷ in toune,
 Dedyst⁸ floure-gerland or coroune⁹
 To make wommen to gadyr þere, 15

¹ dancing in a ring, accompanied by singing

² thereto, to it

³ greatly

⁴ danger

⁵ pomp

⁶ quarreling, discord

⁷ or

⁸ madest

⁹ coronal, wreath

To se whych þat feyrer were,
 þys ys agens þe commaundement,
 And þe halyday for þe ys shent¹;
 Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,
 And ful grete pryde, and herte hye.²

Ȝyf þou ever janglyst³ at messe,
 Yn þe cherche with more or lesse,
 And lettyst⁴ men of⁵ here preyers,
 For hem perel sopely þou berys;
 þe halyday þou holdest nat rygt,
 And lettyst to wurschyp God almygt.
 Halyday was made for preyere,
 To God oure herende⁶ for to bere.

Certys we ougt þan with ful mynde
 To preye God us of synne unbynde,⁷
 And yn gode lyfe us wysse and rede,⁸
 And forgeve us al oure mysdede.

Ȝyf þou hauntyst⁹ to make þy play
 At þe taverne on þe halyday,
 To many on¹⁰ comyþ þarfore evyl
 þurgh cumberaunce¹¹ of þe devyl.
 Holy Chyrche wyl þe werne¹²
 þe halyday to go to þe taverne,
 And namly byfore þe noun,¹³
 Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be doun.
 Taverne ys þe devyls knyfe;
 Hyt sleþ¹⁴ þe, oper soule or lyfe;
 One of þys shal hyt do,
 Ȝyf þou haunte¹⁵ comunly parto.
 Hyt shortyþ þy lyfe, over moche drynkyng,
 And sleþ þy soule with bakbytyngge;
 Hyt wastyþ þy body, and makeþ þe drye,

¹ spoiled, ruined² high heart³ dost engage in altercation⁴ dost hinder⁵ from⁶ petition⁷ set us free from sin⁸ direct and counsel⁹ art accustomed¹⁰ many a one¹¹ harassing, temptation¹² forbid¹³ noon¹⁴ slayeth¹⁵ resort

And gadryþ¹ lecherye to glotonye;
 And þe comaundment ys brokun,
 And þe halyday, byfore of spokun.

Ȝyf þou do any man o dawē²
 On þe halyday for any lawe,
 Swyche men grevusly werche
 Agens þe state of Holy Chyrche;
 For holy preyere, and for þe pees,
 Þe halyday God hyt chees.

Ȝyf þou ever with jogeloure,³
 With hasa[r]doure,⁴ or with rotoure,⁵
 Hauntyst taverne, or were to any pere⁶
 To pley at þe ches or at þe tablere,⁷
 Specyaly before þe noun,
 Whan Goddys servyse owyþ to be doun,
 Hyt ys agens þe comaundment
 And Holy Cherches asent.⁸

Ȝyf þou be *infra sacros*,⁹
 And art a clerk, and hast þe los¹⁰
 Of subdekene, or dekene by name,
 So moche art þou þe more to blame.
 Þys¹¹ lerned men ȝyven ensample so
 Þat þe lewd¹² men þe more mysdo.¹³

THE EVIL OF TOURNAMENTS

Of tournamentys þat are forbede
 Yn Holy Cherche, as men rede,
 Of tournamentys Y preve¹⁴ þerynne,
 Sevene poyntes of dedly synne:
 Fyrst ys pryde, as þou wel wost,¹⁵
 Avauntement,¹⁶ bobaunce, and bost;

¹ adds; MS. gadryd

² kill any man

³ juggler (one who entertained with songs, stories, or tricks)

⁴ player at dice

⁵ player on the rote

⁶ a companion to any one

⁷ backgammon

⁸ sanction

⁹ of the lower clergy

¹⁰ praise, honor

¹¹ these

¹² ignorant

¹³ do evil

¹⁴ prove

¹⁵ knowest

¹⁶ self-glorification

Of ryche atyre ys here avaunce,¹
 Prykyng² here hors with olyprauce.³
 Wete þou wel þer ys envye
 Whan one seep anoþer do maystrye⁴;
 5 Oþer yn wurdys oþer yn dedys,
 Envye moste of alle hem ledys.
 Yre⁵ and wrappe may þey nat late⁶;
 Ofte are tournamentys made for hate.
 10 Ȝyf every knygt lovede oþer weyl,
 Tournamentes shulde be never a deyl⁷;
 And certys þey falle yn sloghnes,⁸
 Þey love hyt more þan God oþer messe;
 And, þerof ys hyt no doute,
 Þey dyspende more gode þer aboute⁹ —
 15 þat ys ȝeve alle to folye —
 þan to any dede of mercy.

And ȝyt may nat, on no wyse,
 Be forgete¹⁰ Dame Coveytyse,
 For she shal fonde,¹¹ on alle wyse,¹²
 20 To wynne hors and harnyse.
 And ȝyt shal he make sum robbery,
 Or bygyle hys hoste þer¹³ he shal lye.¹⁴

Glotonye also ys hem among,
 Delycyus metes¹⁵ to make hem strong,
 25 And drynke þe wyne þat he were lyght,
 Wyþ glotonye to make hym wyght.¹⁶

Ȝyt ys þere Dame Lecherye;
 Of here¹⁷ cumþ alle here¹⁸ maystrye.
 Many tymes, for wymmen sake,
 30 Knyghteys tournamentys make;
 And whan he wendyþ to þe tournament

¹ boast, vaunt² urging on³ vanity, ostentation⁴ wonderful deeds⁵ anger⁶ forsake, desist from⁷ bit⁸ sloth⁹ in this pursuit¹⁰ forgotten¹¹ try¹² by every means¹³ where¹⁴ spend the night¹⁵ viands¹⁶ courageous¹⁷ her¹⁸ their

She sendyþ hym sum pryvy¹ present,
 And byt² hym do for hys lemman
 Yn vasshelage³ alle þat he kan;
 So ys he bete⁴ þere, for here love,
 þat he ne may sytte hys hors above,
 þat peraventure, yn alle hys lyve,
 Shal he never after pryve.

5

BISHOP GROSSETESTE OF LINCOLN

Y shall ȝow telle, as Y have herd,
 Of þe bysshope Seynt Roberd⁵;
 Hys toname⁶ ys Grostest
 Of Lynkolne, so seyþ þe gest.⁷
 He loved moche to here þe harpe,
 For mannys wytte hyt makyþ sharpe.
 Next hys chaumbre, besyde hys stody,
 Hys harpers chaumbre was fast þerby;
 Many tymes, be nyȝtys and dayys,
 He had solace of notes⁸ and layys.
 One asked hym onys⁹ resun why
 He had delyte yn mynstralsy;
 He answerede hym on þys manere,
 Why he helde þe harper so dere:
 'þe vertu of þe harpe, þurgh skylle and ryȝt,
 Wyl destroye þe fendes myȝt,
 And to þe croys by gode skylle
 Ys þe harpe lykened weyle.
 Anoþer poynt cumforteth me:
 þat God hap sent unto a tre
 So moche joye to here with eere;
 Moche þan more joye ys þere
 With God hymselfe, þere he wonys.¹⁰

10

15

20

25

30

¹ secret
² bids
³ prowess
⁴ beaten, smitten

⁵ Robert
⁶ surname, nickname
⁷ romance, tale
⁸ melodies, songs

⁹ once
¹⁰ where he dwells

þe harpe þerof me ofte mones¹
 Of þe joye and of þe blys
 Where God hymself wonys and ys:
 þarefor, gode men, ȝe shul lere,²
 Whan ȝe any glemen here,
 To wurschep God at³ ȝoure powere,
 As Davyd seyþ yn þe Sautere⁴:
 "Yn harpe, yn thabour, and symphan gle,⁵
 Wurschepe God; yn troumpes,⁶ and sautre
 Yn cordys,⁷ an organes, and bellys ryngyng
 Yn al þese, wurschepe ȝe hevene Kyng.⁸"

QUIET IN CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD DURING THE TIME OF SERVICE

Karolles, wrastlynges, or somour-games,¹⁰
 Whoso ever haunteþ any swyche¹¹ shames¹²
 Yn cherche oþer yn chercheȝerd,
 Of sacrylage he may be aferd;
 Or entyrludes, or syngynges,
 Or tabure bete,¹³ or oþer pypynge,
 Alle swyche þyng forbodyn es
 Whyle þe prest stondeþ at messe.
 Alle swyche to every gode preste ys lothe,
 And sunner wyl he make hym wroth
 þan he wyl þat haþ no wyt,
 Ne undyrstondeþ nat Holy Wryt;
 And specyaly, at hyghe tymes,
 Karolles to synge, and rede rymys,
 Noght yn none holy stedes,¹⁴
 þat myȝt dysturble þe prestes bedes,¹⁵

¹ reminds² learn³ according to⁴ psalter⁵ music of the symphony (instrument like the tabor)⁶ trumpets⁷ psaltery⁸ chords (strings of a musical instrument)⁹ Ps. 150. 3-5¹⁰ summer-games¹¹ such¹² disgraceful doings¹³ beating¹⁴ places¹⁵ devotion

Or ȝyf he were yn orysun,¹
 Or any ouȝer devocyun,
 Sacrylage ys alle hyt tolde.²

THE TALE OF THE MINER

þyr was a man begunde þe see
 A mynour, woned³ yn a cyte. 5
 (Mynurs, þey make yn hyllys holes,
 As yn þe West Cuntre men seke coles.)
 þys mynur soȝte stones undyr þe molde,⁴
 þat men make of⁵ sylver and golde;
 He wrogt on a day, and holed⁶ yn þe hyl; 10
 A perylous chaunce to hym fyl,⁷
 For a grete party⁸ of þat yche⁹ myne
 Fyl dowun yn þe hole, and closed hym ynne.
 Hys felaus alle, þat were hym hende,¹⁰
 þat he were dede weyl soþely wende; 15
 þey ȝede¹¹ and toke hem alle to rede,¹²
 And tolde hys wyfe þat he was dede.
 þys womman pleynd¹³ here husbonde sore —
 Wolde God þat many swyche wommen wore! —
 She hylpe hys soule yn alle þyng, 20
 In almesdede, and yn offryng;
 She offred for hym to þe auter,
 Ful of wyne, a pecher,¹⁴
 And a feyre lofe withalle,
 Every day as for a pryncypalle,¹⁵ 25
 Alle þat twelvemoneþ stably,¹⁶
 But o¹⁷ day þat passed forby.
 Fewe swyche wymmen now we fynde,

1 prayer, supplication
 2 counted, considered
 3 who dwelt
 4 earth
 5 from which are made
 6 dug

7 befel
 8 part
 9 same
 10 kindly disposed
 11 went
 12 took counsel all together

13 lamented, bewailed
 14 pitcher
 15 ?
 16 regularly
 17 one

RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC PIECES

þat to here husbondes are so kynde.
 But þys wyfe, at ¹ alle here myȝt,
 Ded for hym boþe day and nyȝt.
 Fyl hyt at þe twelvemoneȝ ende,
 Hys felaws to þe mounteyne gun wende,
 And come to þe same stede eftē
 þere þey last here werk ilefte,
 Ryȝt þere þey fyrst bygan,
 And perced þurgh unto þys man.
 þe man yn gode state þey fonde,
 Lyvyng withoute wem ² or wounde.
 Everych one þey hadde grete ferly,³
 And þat was grete resun why
 Alle þo men were yn grete were ⁴
 How he had lyved alle þat zere.
 But he tolde hem everych one
 How he hadde lyved þere alone:
 'Y have lyved gracyous lyfe
 þurgh þe curtesye of my wyfe,
 For every day she haþ me sent
 Brede and wyne to ⁵ present;
 But o day certys ete Y noȝt,
 For no mete ⁶ was to me broȝt.'
 þey led þys man unto þe tounne,
 And tolde þys myracle up and dounne,
 Fyrst þurogh þe cyte,
 And seþþe ⁷ þurogh þe cuntre.
 þey asked hym, at þe laste,
 þat day þat he dyde faste;
 He tolde hem þe dayes name,
 And hys wyfe seyde þe same;
 þat day she offred never a deyl ⁸ —
 þe Gode Fryday he myȝt be weyl.

¹ with
² harm, injury
³ wonder, astonishment

⁴ doubt, uncertainty
⁵ as a
⁶ food

Now mow¹ ge here pat almesdede
 Gostely² a man wyl fede,
 And so mow ge weyl undyrstande
 pat God ys payd of³ gode offrande.

But for alle pys tale, yn goure lyves,
 Truste ge nat moche on goure wyves,
 Ne on goure chyldryn, for no pyng,
 But makeþ geself⁴ goure offryng,
 For so kynde a womman as Y of tolde
 Lyveþ nat now, be þou bolde⁵;
 Ne no clerk, pat pys ryme redys,
 Shal fynde a womman of so kynde dedes.

5

10

THE BOOK OF THE KNIGHT OF LA TOUR-LANDRY

Among the numerous instruction-books of the Middle Ages was one known as *Le Livre du Chevalier de la Tour-Landry pour l'Enseignement de ses Filles*, a series of tales written (collected, rather) in 1371-1372 for his motherless daughters by Geoffroy de la Tour-Landry, a nobleman of Anjou. A similar book written for his sons has disappeared entirely, but this for the daughters was frequently copied — about a dozen manuscript copies being still in existence. A German translation of the work was printed toward the end of the fifteenth century, and an English translation by Caxton in 1484.

Our selections are taken from the Early English Text Society's print (No. 33, ed. Wright, 1868; revised ed., 1906) of MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 1764, assigned to the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461). This translation, by an unknown hand, is much less literal than Caxton's (cf. Wright's introduction). The selections are from pages 1-4, 22, 26-8, and 39-40 of the edition of 1906. The words in brackets are supplied from Caxton's edition.

PROLOGUE

In the yere of the incarnation of oure Lord MCCCCLXXI, as Y was in a gardin, al hevi and full of thought, in the shadow, about the ende of the monthe of Aprill, but a litell Y rejoysed me of the melodie and 15 song of the wilde briddes. Thei sang there in her⁶ langages, as the thrustill, the thrusshe, the nytinggale, and other briddes, the whiche

¹ may
² spiritually

³ pleased with
⁴ yourself

⁵ assured
⁶ their

were full of mirthe and joye; and thaire suete songe made my herte to lighten, and made me to thinke of the tyme that is passed of my youthe, how love in gret distresse had holde me, and how Y was in her service mani tyme full of sorugh and gladnesse, as mani lovers
 5 ben. But my sorw was heled, and my service wel ysette¹ and quitte, for he gave [me a fayr] wyff, and . . .² that was bothe faire and good, [whiche had knowleche of alle honoure, alle good, and fayre mayntenynge,³] and of all good she was bell⁴ and the floure; and Y delited me so moche in her that Y made for her love-songges, balades,
 10 rondelles, viralles,⁵ and diverse nwe thinges in the best wise that Y couthe. . . . And as Y was in the saide gardein, thinkynge of these thoughtz, Y sawe come towardes me my iii daughters, of the whiche I was joyfull, and had grete desire that thei shuld turne to good and worshipec above all ertheli thinges, for thei were yonge, and had but
 15 tendir witte; and so atte the begynnyng a man aught to lerne⁶ his daughters with good ensaumples yevinge, as dede the Quene Proues of Hongrie, that faire and goodly chastised⁷ and taught her daughters, as it [is] contened in her boke. . . . And Y said to hem that Y wolde make a boke of ensaumples, for to teche my doughtres, that thei
 20 might understond how thei shulde governe hem, and knowe good from evell. And so Y made hem extraie⁸ me ensaumples of the Bible and other bokes that Y had, as the gestis⁹ of kingges, the croniclez of Fraunce, Grece, of Ingland, and of mani other straunge londes. And Y made hem rede me everi boke; and ther that Y fonde a good
 25 ensauple, Y made extraie it oute. And thanne Y made this boke. But Y wolde not sette it in ryme, but in prose, for to abregge¹⁰ it, and that it might be beter and more plainly to be understond. And Y made this boke for the gret love that Y had to my said doughtres, the whiche Y loved as fader aught to love his child, having hertely
 30 joye to finde wayes to sterc and turne hem to goodnesse and worshippe, and to love and serve her¹¹ Creatoure, and to have love of her neighbours and of the world. And therfor all faders and moders, after good nature,¹² aught to teche her children to leve all wrong and

¹ bestowed² MS. illegible³ deportment⁴ bore the bell⁵ viirelays⁶ teach⁷ corrected⁸ extract⁹ tales¹⁰ abridge, shorten¹¹ their¹² in the kindness of their hearts

evell waies, and shew hem the true right weye, as wele for the salvacion of the soule as for the worshipe of the worldely bodi. And therfor Y have made ii bokes, one for my sones, another for my doughtres, for to lerne hem to rede. And in reding, it may not be but that thei shall kepe with hem som good ensaumple for to flec evell, and withholde the good. 5 For it shall not be posible but sumtyme thei shall have mynde on sum good ensaumple, sum good doctrine of this boke, whanne thei knowe or here speke hereafter, as thei fall in the rewe¹ upon sum spekers of suche matiers.

THE STORY OF THE MAGPIE

Ther was a woman that had a pie² in a cage, that spake and wolde 10 tell talys that she saw do. And so it happed that her husbonde made kepe³ a gret cle in a litell ponde in his gardin, to that entent to yeve it sum of his frendes that wolde come to see hym; but the wyff, whanne her husbond was oute, saide to her maide: 'Late us ete the gret cle, and Y will saie to my husbond that the otour⁴ hathe eten 15 hym;' and so it was done. And whan the good man was come, the pye began to tell hym how her maistresse had eten the cle. And he yode⁵ to the ponde, and fonde not the cle. And he asked his wiff wher the cle was become.⁶ And she wende to have excused her, but he saide her: 'Excuse you not, for Y wote well ye have eten yt, for 20 the pye hathe told me.' And so ther was gret noyse⁷ betwene the man and hys wiff for etinge of the cle. But whanne the good man was gone, the maistresse and the maide come to the pic, and plucked of all the fedres on the pyes hede, saieng: 'Thou hast discovered⁸ us of the ele'; and thus was the pore pye plucked. But ever after, 25 whanne the pie sawe a balled or a pilled⁹ man, or a woman with an high forhede, the pie saide to hem: 'Ye spake of the cle.' And therfor here is an ensaumple that no woman shulde ete no lycorous¹⁰ morcelles in the absens and withoute weting¹¹ of her husbond, but yef it so were that it be with folk of worshippe, to make hem chere¹²; 30 for this woman was afterward mocked for the pye and the cle.

¹ successively² magpie³ caused to be kept⁴ otter⁵ went⁶ what had become of the eel⁷ disturbance⁸ betrayed⁹ with hair removed¹⁰ dainty¹¹ knowledge¹² entertainment

THE STORY OF THE OBEDIENT WIFE

Hit happed onis there were iii marchauntes that yede¹ homwarde from a faiere, and as thei fell in talkinge, ridyng on the waye, one of hem saide: 'It is a noble thinge a man to have a good wiff that obeiethe and dothe his biddinge atte all tymes.' 'Be my trouthe,' saide that other, 'my wiff obeiethe me truly.' 'Be God,' saide that other, 'Y trowe myn obeieth best to her husbonde.' Thanne he that beganne furst to speke saide: 'Lete² Ieye a wager of a dener,³ and whos wiff that obeiethe worst, lete her husbonde paie for the dener' and thus the wager was leyde. And thei ordeined amonges hem how thei shulde saie⁴ her wyfes, for thei ordeined that everi man shulde bidde his wyff lepe into a basin that thei shulde sette afore her, and they were suoren that none shulde late his wiff have weting⁵ of her wager, save only thei shulde saye: 'Lokithe,⁶ wiff, that Y comaunde be done.' However it be, after one of hem bade his wiff lepe into the basin that he had sette afore her on the grounde, and she answered and axed wherto,⁷ and he saide: 'For it is myn luste,⁸ and Y will ye do it.' 'Be God,' quod she, 'Y will furst wete⁹ wherto ye will have me lepe into the basin.' And for nothings her husbond coude do she wolde not do it. So her husbonde up with his fust,¹⁰ and gave her ii or iii gret strokes; and thanne yede thei to the secounde marchauntys hous, and he comaunded that whatever he bade do it shulde be done, but it was not longe after but he bade his wiff lepe into the basin that was afore her on the flore, and she asked wherto, and she saide she wolde not for hym. And thanne he toke a staffe, and al tobete¹¹ her. And thanne thei yode to the thridde marchauntes hous, and there thei fonde the mete on the borde, and he rowned¹² in one of his felawes heres, and saide: 'After dyner Y will assaie my wiff, and bidde her lepe into the basin.' And so thei sette hem to her¹³ dyner. And whan thei were sette, the good man saide to his wiff: 'Whatever Y bidde loke it be done, however it be.' And she that loved hym, and dredde

¹ went² let us³ dinner⁴ assay, try⁵ knowledge⁶ see to it⁷ for what purpose⁸ desire⁹ know¹⁰ fist¹¹ beat severely¹² whispered¹³ their

hym, herde what he saide, and toke hede to that worde, but she wost¹ not what he ment. But it happed that thei had atte her dyner rere² eggis, and there lacked salt on the borde, and the good man saide: 'Wiff, sele sus table,' and the wiff understode that her husbonde had saide: 'Seyle sus table,' the whiche is in Frenshe: 'Lepe on the borde.' ⁵ And she, that was aferde to disobeie, lepte upon the borde, and threw down mete and drinke, and brake the verres,³ and spilt all that there was on the borde. 'What,' saide the good man, 'thanne canne⁴ ye none other plaie, wiff?' 'Be ye wode,⁵ sir,' she saide, 'Y have do youre biddinge, as ye bade me to my power, notwithstandinge it is ¹⁰ youre harme and myn; but Y had lever ye had harme and Y bothe, thanne Y disobeied youre biddinge; for ye saide: "Seyle sus table." 'Nay,' quod he, 'Y saide: "Sele sus table," that is to saie, "Salt on the borde." 'Bi my trouthe,' she saide, 'Y understode that ye bade me lepe on the borde,' and there was moche mirthe and laughinge. And ¹⁵ the other two marchauntes saide it was no nede to bidde her lepe into the basin, for she obeied ynough; wherthorugh⁶ thei consented that her husbond had wonne the wager, and thei had lost bothe. And after⁷ she was gretly preised for her obeisaunce to her husbonde, and she was not bcte as were that other ii wyves that wolde not do her ²⁰ husbondes comaundement.

HOW ST. BERNARD'S SISTER WAS LED AWAY FROM VANITIES

Hit befell that Seint Bernarde, that was an holy man and of gret richesse and birth, lefte all his possessiones and good, and yede to serve God in an abbey; and for his holy lyving, and weringe⁸ of the heyre, and doinge gret abstinence and almesdedes, made⁹ that ²⁵ he was chose to be abbot of that place. And he hadd a gret ladi to his suster, that come to see hym withe gret meyni,¹⁰ well arraied with riche clothinge, and riche atyred of perles and presious stones. And in this array she come afore her brother, Seint Bernard. And whanne

¹ knew
² underdone
³ glasses
⁴ know

⁵ mad
⁶ wherefore
⁷ afterwards
⁸ MS. of weringe

⁹ brought it about
¹⁰ retinue

he sawe her in that array, he turned to her his backe and blessed¹ hym, and the lady was ashamed, and asked whi he ne wolde with her speke. And he saide that he had gret pitee to see her so disgised, and in that pride that she was inne. And she dede of² her riche
 5 atyre and gay clothes, and toke other symple arraye. And he saide: 'Suster, yef Y love youre bodi, by reson Y shuld beter love youre sowle. Wene ye not that ye displese God and his aungells to see in you suche pompe and pride, to aorne⁸ suche a carion as is youre body, whiche withinne vii dayes that⁴ the soule ys parted from the body, he
 10 saverithe⁵ in suche wise that no creatoure may suffre to be nigh it or see it, with[out] gret abhominacion? Faire suster, whi thenke ye not of⁶ the pore peple that deyen for hungir and colde, that for the sixte part of youre gay arraye xl persones might be clothed, refreshed, and kepte from the colde?' And thus Bernarde declared the foly and the
 15 pompe of the worlde to his suster, and also the savement of her soule. And thanne the ladi wepte, and solde away her clothes, and levid after an holy lyff, and had love of God, aungeles, and holy seintez, the whiche is beter thanne of the worldly pepill.

GESTA ROMANORUM: THE MAGIC IMAGE

The *Gesta Romanorum* is a series of mediæval tales and their morals, originally written in Latin, and widely used for further artistic development or for illustrative material by the writers and preachers of the later Middle Ages. In the collection are versions of the tale of Constance which Chaucer tells in his *Man of Law's Tale*, of Shakespeare's bond- and casket-incidents in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of the Lear story; and many less-known tales appear in later poems and ballads. The date, authorship, and origin of the series are doubtful; for discussions of them see the Latin version, ed. Oesterley, 1872, revised 1877, and the Early English Text Society's reprint of the Middle English versions (ed. Herrtage, 1879; Ex. Ser. 33). Cf. also Swan's translation of the Latin *Gesta Romanorum* in the Bohn Library.

The following selection is from Herrtage's reprint of MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 7333, and is No. 3 of the series of tales (pp. 7-8). The Middle English versions (3 manuscripts) are all dated in the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461).

Our story has been versified by William Morris as *The Writing on the Image*, in *The Earthly Paradise*.

¹ made the sign of the cross

² took off

⁸ adorn

⁴ from the time when

⁵ it has an odor

⁶ MS. that

Deoclician was emperour in þe cite of Rome, in þe empire of whom was a philosophre, callid Lenoppus, þe which had bi his crafte sette up an ymage, þe which put out an hond with a fynger, and upon the finger was wretyn wordis, *Percute hic*, that is to say, 'Smite here.' This ymage stode þer long, and many a day after þe deth of þe phi- 5 losophre; and many come to þis finger, and radde the superscripcion, but þey undirstode it not, and therfore þei hadde moch marvaile what it shuld mene. So in a certeyne tyme þer com a clerke of ferr con- treys, and ofte tymis he sawe þis ymage, and þis finger with þe scrip- ture.¹ And in a certeyne day he toke a shovill, and dyggyd in the 10 erth, undir þe superscripcion. And anon he fond a hous of marbill undir þe erth; and thanne he went down, and enterid into the hall, and þer he fond so many riche jewelis and marvelous þingys, that no tunge cowde tell. Aftir þis he sawe a bord or a table, isprad with rich metys ynowe þeruppon. Thenne he lokid afer,² and sawe standing a 15 charbuncle ston, the which ȝaf liȝt over all the hous; and agenst hit stod a man, with a bowe in his hond, redy for to schete. This clerke perceivid well this sight, and þou[ȝ]te, þoȝ I tell þis siȝt³ whenne I am ago⁴ hens, no man woll trowe⁵ me, and þerfore I woll take som of þis goode in tokne. He stirte to þe bord, and tooke a faire gilt cowpe, 20 and put it up; and anoon the man with þe bowe sheet to the char- buncle ston so soore that it ȝede⁶ onsundre, and þo was all the liȝt agon, and þe hous was full of dorknesse. And whenne þe clerke sawe þis, he wepte soore, for he wiste not how to passe out, for dorknesse. And þerfore he dwelte þer still, and þer he endyd his lif, etc. 25

Moralite. Goode men, þis ymage that is thus ypaynt⁷ is the devell, þe which seith evermore: *Percute hic*, 'Smyte here,' that is to sey, he puttith in our hertes erthely thingis, and biddith us take hem, but he woll never speke of hevinly thingis. The clerke þat smytith with the shovill bitokenyth þe wise men of þis wordle,⁸ and ben advocatis and 30 pletouris,⁹ þe which by sotilte and wickidnesse getith þe goode of þis wordle, and þe vanyteys of þis wordle. And whenne thei have geten hem with such worching, they fyndith many marveilous þingis, þat is

¹ inscription, writing² afar³ MS. siȝth⁴ gone⁵ believe⁶ parted⁷ painted⁸ world⁹ pleaders

to sey, dilectabill þingis of þe wordle, in þe which þei have gret dilectacion. The charbuncle ston þat geueth lȝt is þe yowth of man, þe which geueth to man hardinesse to have dilectacion and liking of ¹ wordly þingis. The archer þat shetith is deth, þe which stondith evermore
 5 redy in awaite,² for to shete his dart. Now the clerke þanne takith knyfe—what is that? The wordly man, trowing to have all thingis at his owne will. But in that trust the archer shetith att þe charbuncle ston, that is to sey, deth shetith his schotys to þe gowth of man, and smytith his strength⁴ and his mygte; and þenne lieth the yowth in
 10 derkenesse of synne, in the which derkenesse many men oftyn tym deyeth. And þefore lat us fle all lustys and all likingys, and þenne we schull not faile of everlasting lȝt, *ad quam nos perducatur*, etc.

THE BESTIARY

The *Bestiary*, or *Physiologus*, had a history of something like a thousand years before it entered Middle English, which it did as a translation from the Latin of a certain Theobaldus; his work had been already rendered into French by Philippe de Thaon, who dedicated his version to Adela, second wife (1121) of Henry I of England. The Middle English version belongs to ca. 1220.

The two subjects dealt with below—the Whale (Turtle) and the Panthe—are also treated in Old English poetry (see my edition of the Old English *Elene*, *Phoenix*, and *Physiologus* (New Haven, 1919), where a much fuller account is given, with references to the bibliography of the subject).

Our text is derived from Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 55-75) which in turn reproduces Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae* 1. 208-2; Emendations are by Mätzner, and (of the *Whale*) by Emerson (*Middle English Reader*); others are mine.

THE WHALE (TURTLE)

Cethegrande⁵ is a fis,⁶
 De moste⁷ ðat in water is;
 Ðat tu wuldes seien⁸ get,
 Gef ðu it soȝe⁹ wan it flet,¹⁰

¹ MS. the

² worldly

³ waiting

⁴ MS. strenght

⁵ whale (*properly*, turtle)

⁶ fish

⁷ largest

⁸ saw

⁹ saw

¹⁰ floated

Dat it were an cilond¹

Dat sete² on³ ðe se-sond.⁴

Dis fis ðat is unride,⁵

Danne him hungreð, he gapeð wide;

Ut of his ðrote it smit⁶ an onde,⁷

Ðe swetteste ðing ðat is o londe.

Derfore oðre fisses to him dragen⁸;

Wan he it felen he aren fagen⁹;

He cumen and hoven¹⁰ in his muð;

Of his swike¹¹ he arn uncuð.¹²

Dis cete¹³ ðanne hise chaveles¹⁴ lukeð,¹⁵

Disse fisses alle in sukeð;

Ðe smale he wile ðus biswiken,¹⁶

Ðe grete maig he nogt bigripen.¹⁷

Dis fis wuneð wið ðe se-grund,¹⁸

And liveð ðer evre heil and sund,¹⁹

Til it cumeð ðe time

Ðat storm stireð al ðe se,

Danne sumer and winter winnen.²⁰

Ne mai it wunen ðerinne[n],

So drovi²¹ is te sees grund,

Ne mai he wunen ðer ðat stund,²²

Oc stireð up²³ and hoveð stille.

Wiles²⁴ ðat²⁵ weder is so ille,

Ðe sipes²⁶ ðat arn on se fordriven²⁷ —

Loð hem is deð,²⁸ and lef²⁹ to liven —

Biloken³⁰ hem, and sen ðis fis;

An cilond he wenen³¹ it is.

1 island
2 sat
3 MS. one (em. E.)
4 sea-sand (nom.)
5 unwieldy, bulky
6 emits
7 breath
8 draw near
9 glad
10 abide
11 trickery

12 ignorant
13 sea-monster
14 jaws
15 shuts
16 deceive
17 seize, get hold of
18 dwells near the bottom of
the sea
19 well and sound
20 contend
21 turbid

22 at that time
23 rises
24 while
25 MS. ðar (em. E.)
26 ships
27 driven about
28 MS. ded (em. E.)
29 dear, pleasant
30 look about
31 they suppose

Đerof he aren swiðe fagen,
 And mid here migt đarto he dragen
 Sipes on festen,¹
 And alle up gangen,
 Of ston mid stel in ðe tunder²
 Wel to brennen³ on⁴ ðis wunder,
 Warmen hem wel, and eten⁵ and drinken.
 Đe fir he feleð, and doð⁶ hem sinken,
 For sone he diveð dun to grunde;
 He drepeð⁷ hem alle wiðuten wunde.

Significacio. Đis devel is mikel wið wil and magt
 (So⁸ wicches⁹ haven in here craft);
 He doð men hungren, and haven đrist,¹⁰
 And mani oðer sinful list,¹¹
 Tolleð¹² men to him wið his onde,
 Woso him folegeð,¹³ he findeð sonde.¹⁴
 Đo arn ðe little in¹⁵ leve¹⁶ lage¹⁷;
 Đe mikle ne maig he to him dragen —
 Đe mikle, I mene ðe stedefast
 In rigte leve mid fles¹⁸ and gast.
 Woso listneð develes lore,
 On lengðe it sal him rewen¹⁹ sore;
 Woso festeð²⁰ hope on him,
 He sal him folgen to helle dim.

1 with reference to fasten-
 ing, for the purpose of
 anchoring

2 tinder

3 make a fire

4 MS. one (em. E.)

5 MS. heten (em. E.)

6 causes

7 slays

8 such as

9 enchanters; MS. witches
 (em. E.)

10 thirst

11 pleasure

12 draw; MS. colleð (em. E.)

13 follows; MS. folgeð (em.
 E.)

14 shame

15 (who are) in

16 faith

17 low

18 body

19 rue; MS. rewen (em.
 E.)

20 fasteneth (alluding to
 the anchorage and
 landing)

THE PANTHER

Panter is an wilde der,
 Is non fairere on werlde her;
 He is blac so bon ¹ of qual,²
 Mid ³ wite spottes sapen ⁴ al,
 Wit, and trendled ⁵ als a wel,⁶
 And it ⁷ bicumeð him swiðe wel. 5
 Worso he wuneð, ðis panter,
 He fedeð him al mid oðer der;
 Of ðo ðe he wile he nimeð ðe cul,⁸
 And fet him ⁹ wei til he is ful. 10
 In his hole siðen ¹⁰ stille
 Ðre dages he slepen wille;
 Ðan after ðe ðridde dai
 He riseð and remeð ¹¹ lude so ¹² he mai.
 Ut of his ðrote cumeð a smel 15
 Mid his rem forð over al,
 Ðat overcumeth haliweie ¹³
 Wið swetnesse, Ic gu ¹⁴ sie;
 And al ðat evre smelleð swete,
 Be it drie, be it wete. 20
 For ðe swetnesse off his onde,
 Worso ¹⁵ he walkeð o londe,
 Worso he walkeð,¹⁶ er worso he wuneð,¹⁷
 Ilk der ðe him hereð to him cumeð,
 And folegeð him upon ¹⁸ ðe wold, 25
 For ðe swetnesse ðe Ic gu have told.
 Ðe dragunes one ¹⁹ ne stiren nout
 Wiles ²⁰ te panter ramed ogt,²¹

¹ bone; MS. bro
² whale
³ MS. mið
⁴ fashioned
⁵ round
⁶ wheel
⁷ MS. itt (em. M.)

⁸ choice, best
⁹ himself
¹⁰ afterwards
¹¹ roars
¹² loud as
¹³ balsam
¹⁴ to you

¹⁵ wheresoever
¹⁶ MS. walked
¹⁷ dwells
¹⁸ MS. upone
¹⁹ alone
²⁰ while
²¹ anything, at all

Oc daren¹ stille in here pit,
 Als so² he weren of dede³ offrigt.⁴

Significacio. Crist is tokned ðurg ðis der,
 Wos kinde⁵ we haven told gu her;

For he is faier over alle men,
 So evensterre over erðe fen⁶;

Ful wel he taunede⁷ his luvē to man
 Wan he ðurg holi spel him wan;

And longe he lai her in an hole —
 Wel him ðat⁸ he it wulde ðolen⁹;

Ðre daies slep he al onon,¹⁰
 Ðanne he ded was in blod and bon.

Up he ros, and remede iwis¹¹ —
 Of helle pine, of hevne blis —

And steg¹² to hevne uvemest¹³;
 Ðer wuncð wið Fader and Holi Gast.

Amonges men a swete smel¹⁴
 He let herof — his holi spel,¹⁵

Worðurg we mugen folgen him
 Into his godcundnesse¹⁶ fin.¹⁷

And ðat wirm,¹⁸ ure widerwine¹⁹ —
 Worso²⁰ of Godes word is dine²¹

Ne dar he stiren, ne no man deren,²²
 Ðe²³ while he²⁴ lage²⁵ and luvē beren.

¹ crouch, cower

² if

³ death; MS. dede

⁴ frightened

⁵ nature

⁶ mire

⁷ manifested

⁸ MS. dat

⁹ endure

¹⁰ uninterruptedly

¹¹ MS. in wis (em. M.)

¹² ascended

¹³ on high; MS. uvenest (em. M.)

¹⁴ MS. mel. (em. M.)

¹⁵ teaching

¹⁶ divinity's

¹⁷ utmost reach

¹⁸ serpent

¹⁹ adversary

²⁰ whereso

²¹ mention (*lit.* din); MS. ðine

²² injure

²³ MS. ðer (em. M.)

²⁴ they

²⁵ law

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

The Owl and the Nightingale is the earliest specimen in English of the true contention-poem—a verbal contest for supremacy—analogue to the Latin, French, and Provençal *partimen*, *tenson*, *plait*, *jeu-parti*, etc. Its main subject, after the opening personalities, is joy and æstheticism, represented by the nightingale, as opposed to practicality and seriousness, represented by the owl. In Fritz Reuter's *Hanne Nüte* (Part 9), the sparrow and the nightingale contrast their modes of life:

'Gu'n Abend, Jochen,' seggt sei, 'na?
Ik bün taurigg ut Afrika.'—
'Ja,' segg ik, 'süllst di brav wat schämen,
So in de Welt herüm tau striken,
Bliw hir bi uns, bi dinesglikē!
An Lotten kannst en Bispill nemen,
De brött nu all den zweiten Satz.'—
Dunn lacht s' un seggt: 'Mein lieber Spatz,
Dein Lotting ist ein braves Weib,
Un Essen kochen, Strümpfe knütten,
Un Junge aus die Eier sitten
Ist sicher auch ein Zeitvertreib;
Doch wir, die in der Poesie
Die Aufgab' unsres Lebens finnen,
Wir Künstler und wir Sängerrinnen,
Wir knütten, Jochen, un brüten nie.'

'In a group of poets that were active in the South of England at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the author of *The Owl and the Nightingale* stands preëminent. Of striking vigor and originality of mind, possessing a sane critical judgment founded on a considerable culture, and endowed with astonishing poetical gifts for his time and environment, he produced a composition that seems the earliest, and from many points of view the best, original long poem of a wholly imaginative character written in English before the time of Chaucer' (Wells' ed., p. xxxvii). Elsewhere Wells says: 'Theme and treatment grew out of the poet's own immediate experience. . . . The poem is notable in its period for its embodiment of the distinctly national tone and spirit that were beginning to grow out of the amalgamation of the French and the English, the learned and the popular, in the island.' This author's identity is unknown; it would seem probable that he is *not* the Nicholas of Guildford chosen by the disputants as judge.

The poem is found in two manuscripts. Our selection (made with the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.) is from John Edwin Wells' reproduction of MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Caligula A. 9, which belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century, with his emendations, and a few of my own. The selection includes lines 1-94, 101-285, 287-348.

Ich was in one sumere¹ dale,
 In one supe² digele³ hale,⁴
 Iherde Ich holde grete tale⁵
 An hule⁶ and one⁷ nigtingale.
 5 þat plait⁸ was stif and starc⁹ and strong,
 Sum wile¹⁰ softe and lud¹¹ among¹²;
 An¹³ aijer azen oper sval,¹⁴
 And let þat wole¹⁵ mod¹⁶ ut al.
 And eijer seide of operes custe¹⁷
 10 þat alreworste¹⁸ þat hi wuste;
 And hure and hure¹⁹ of opere[s] songe,
 Hi holde plaiding²⁰ supe stronge.

þe nigtingale bigon þe speche
 In one hurne²¹ of one beche,²²
 15 And sat up[on] one vaire boze,²³
 þar were abute blosme inoze,
 In ore²⁴ waste²⁵ picke hegge,
 Imeind²⁶ mid spire²⁷ and grene segge.
 Ho²⁸ was þe gladur vor þe rise,²⁹
 20 And song a vele³⁰ cunne wise³¹;
 Bet³² þugte þe dreim³³ þat he were
 Of harpe and pipe þan he nere,
 Bet þugte þat he were ishote³⁴
 Of harpe and pipe þan of þrote.

25 þo stod on old stoc³⁵ þar biside,
 þar þo ule song hire tide,³⁶

1 a certain
 2 very
 3 secluded
 4 out of the way spot
 5 dispute
 6 owl
 7 a
 8 debate
 9 severe, sharp
 10 sometimes
 11 loud
 12 at intervals

13 and
 14 grew swollen with wrath
 15 evil
 16 mood
 17 character
 18 very worst
 19 at all events
 20 debate
 21 corner, nook
 22 valley; MS. breche
 23 a fair bough
 24 a

25 solitary
 26 mingled
 27 tall grass
 28 she
 29 twig, branch
 30 in many
 31 kinds of ways
 32 rather (better); MS. het (em. W.)
 33 seemed the music
 34 shot, poured forth
 35 stump
 36 at her time, when her time came

And was mid ivi al bigrowe :
 Hit was þare hule carding-stowe.¹
 Þe nigtingale hi iseȝ,²
 And hi bihold and overseȝ,³
 And þuȝte wel wl⁴ of þare hule,
 For me hi halt⁵ lodlich and fule.⁶
 'Unwigt,⁷ ho sede, 'awei þu flo⁸ !
 Me is þe wrs⁹ þat Ich þe so.¹⁰
 Iwis for þine wle¹¹ lete¹²
 Wel oft Ich mine song forlete¹³ ;
 Min horte atflip,¹⁴ and falt¹⁵ mi tonge,
 Wonne þu art to me iþrunge.¹⁶
 Me luste bet speten¹⁷ þane singe,
 Of¹⁸ þine fule ȝogelinge.¹⁹
 Þos²⁰ hule abod fort²¹ hit was eve,
 Ho ne miȝte no leng²² bileve,²³
 Vor hire horte was so gret
 Þat wel neȝ hire fnast²⁴ atschet,²⁵
 And warp²⁶ a word²⁷ þarafter longe :
 'Hu þinc[þ] þe²⁸ nu bi mine songe ?
 We[n]st þu²⁹ þat Ich ne cunne singe,
 Þeȝ Ich ne cunne of writelinge³⁰ ?
 [Oft and] ilome³¹ þu dest me grame,³²
 And seist me boȝe tone³³ and schame.
 Ȝif Ich þe holde on mine vote³⁴ —
 So hit bitide³⁵ þat Ich mote ! —

1 the owl's dwelling-place

2 saw her

3 looked at with scorn

4 evilly

5 men consider her

6 loathsome and foul

7 monster

8 flee (imp.)

9 worse

10 see

11 evil

12 behavior, noise

13 abandon, stop

14 flees away

15 falters

16 pressed close, drawn close

17 I would rather spit

18 because of

19 guggling

20 this

21 until

22 longer

23 remain silent

24 breath

25 shot away, burst forth

26 poured out (*lit.* threw)

27 speech

28 seems it to you

29 do you suppose

30 trilling

31 often

32 harm, injury

33 reproach

34 foot

35 would that it might happen

And þu were ut of pine rise,
þu sholdest singe an oper w[i]se.¹

þe nigtingale gaf answare:
' ðif Ich me loki² wit þe bare,³
And me schilde wit þe blete,⁴
Ne reche Ich nogt of pine þrete:
ðif Ich me holde in mine hegge,
Ne recche Ich never what þu segge.⁵
Ich wot þat þu art unmilde⁶

Wip hom⁷ þat ne muge from þe⁸ schilde;
And þu tukest⁹ wrope¹⁰ and uvele
Whar þu migt over smale fugele.¹¹
Vorpi¹² þu art lop¹³ al fuel-kunne,¹⁴
And alle ho¹⁵ þe driveþ honne,¹⁶
And þe bischricheþ¹⁷ and bigredet,¹⁸
And wel narewe¹⁹ þe biledet²⁰;
And ek forþe²¹ þe sulve mose,²²
Hire þonkes,²³ wolde þe totose.²⁴

þu art lodlich to biholde,
And þu art lop in monie volde²⁵;
þi bodi is short, þi swore²⁶ is smal,
Grettere is þin heved þan þu al;
þin egene bop col-blake and brode,
Rigt swo ho weren ipeint²⁷ mid wode²⁸;
þu starest so²⁹ þu wille abiten³⁰
Al þat þu migt³¹ mid clivre³² smiten;
þi bile is stif and scharp and hoked,
Rigt so an owel³³ þat is croked,

¹ in another fashion

² may protect myself

³ against the open

⁴ exposure

⁵ say

⁶ harsh

⁷ those

⁸ MS. se

⁹ domineer

¹⁰ angrily

¹¹ birds

¹² therefore

¹³ hateful

¹⁴ bird-kind

¹⁵ they all

¹⁶ hence

¹⁷ screech at

¹⁸ cry out at

¹⁹ closely

²⁰ pursue

²¹ because of that

²² the very titmouse

²³ willingly

²⁴ pull to pieces

²⁵ in manifold ways

²⁶ neck

²⁷ painted

²⁸ woad

²⁹ as if

³⁰ bite to pieces

³¹ might; MS. mist

³² claws

³³ just like an awl

Þarmid þu clackes[t] oft and longe,
 And þat is on ¹ of þine songe.
 Ac þu þretest to ² mine fleshe,
 Mid þine clivres woldest me meshe.³
 Þe were icundur to one frogge⁴;
 Þat sit at mulne⁵ under cogge⁶;
 Snailles, mus,⁷ and fule wigte,⁸
 Boþ þine cunde and þine rigte.⁹
 Þu sittest adai,¹⁰ and sliḡ[s]t anigst,
 Þu cupest ¹¹ þat þu art on unwigt.
 Þu art lodlich and unclene,
 Bi ¹² þine neste lch lit mene,
 And ek bi þine fule brode ¹³—
 Þu fedest on hom a wel ful fode.¹⁴ . .
 Þat oþer ȝer ¹⁵ a faukun bredde ¹⁶;
 His nest noȝt wel he ne bihedde ¹⁷;
 Þarto þu stele in o¹⁸ day,
 And leidest þaron þi fole ey.¹⁹
 Þo hit bicom ²⁰ þat he haȝte,²¹
 And of his eyre ²² briddes wraȝte,
 Ho broȝte his briddes mete,
 Bihold his nest, iseȝ hi ²³ ete:
 He iseȝ bi one halve ²⁴
 His nest ifuled uthalve.²⁵
 Þe faukun was wroþ wit his bridde,
 And lude ȝal ²⁶ and sterne chidde:
 "Segget me, wo²⁷ havet þis ido?
 Ou nas never icunde ²⁸ þarto;

¹ one

² make threats against

³ crush to a pulp

⁴ it would be more suitable
for you to have a frog
(for food)

⁵ the mill

⁶ cog; this line is supplied
from J.— lacking in C.

⁷ mice

⁸ creatures

⁹ are for thy kind and fit for
thy deserts

¹⁰ by day

¹¹ knowest

¹² concerning

¹³ brood

¹⁴ thou feedest in them a very
foul lot (*lit.* offspring)

¹⁵ year

¹⁶ bred

¹⁷ guarded

¹⁸ one

¹⁹ foul egg

²⁰ when it happened

²¹ it (the falcon) hatch

²² its eggs

²³ watched them

²⁴ on one side

²⁵ on the outer part

²⁶ cried out aloud

²⁷ who

²⁸ innate, natural

Hit was idon ow a loþ custe.¹
 Segge me gif ze hit wiste."
 Þo quap þat on and quad þat oper:
 "Iwis it was ure oger² broþer,
 5 þe zond³ þat haved þat grete heved:
 Wai þat hi[t] nis þarof bireved⁴!
 Worp hit⁵ ut mid þe alre-wrste,
 þat his necke him toberste!"
 þe faucun ilefde⁶ his bridde,
 10 And nom⁷ þat fule brid amidde,⁸
 And warp hit of⁹ þan wilde bowe,¹⁰
 þar¹¹ pie¹² and crowe hit todrowe.
 Herbi men segget a bispel,¹³
 þeȝ hit ne bo fuliche spel¹⁴:
 15 Al so¹⁵ hit is bi þan ungode¹⁶
 þat is icumen of fule brode,
 And is meind wit fro monne¹⁷;
 Ever he cup þat he com þonne,¹⁸
 þat he com of þan adel eye,¹⁹
 20 þeȝ he a fro nest²⁰ leie.
 þeȝ appel trendli²¹ from²² þon trowe,²³
 þar he and oper mid growe,
 þeȝ he bo²⁴ þarfrom bicume,²⁵
 He cup wel whonene he is icume.²⁶
 25 þos word azaf²⁶ þe nigtingale,
 And after þare longe tale
 He song so lude and so scharpe,
 Riȝt so me grulde²⁷ schille²⁸ harpe.

1 in a disagreeable manner;
custe for MS. wiste

2 own

3 the one yonder

4 alas that he is not bereft of it

5 throw him

6 believed

7 took, seized

8 by the middle

9 cast it from

10 bough

11 where

12 magpies

13 in fable, parable

14 long story

15 just so

16 with the evil person

17 mingled with noble
(well-born) men

18 thence

19 addled egg

20 in a noble nest

21 roll (trundle)

22 MS. from

23 tree

24 be

25 gone

26 uttered

27 as if some one were twar

28 shrill

þos hule luste¹ þiderward,
 And hold hire eȝe² noþerwa[r]d,³
 And sat tosvolle⁴ and ibolwe,⁵
 Also ho hadde one frogge isuolȝe,⁶
 For ho wel wiste and was iwar
 þat ho song hire a bisemar,⁷
 And noþeles ho ȝaf⁸ andsuare;
 'Whi neltu⁹ fion into þe bare,¹⁰
 And sewi¹¹ ware¹² unker¹³ bo¹⁴
 Of briȝter howe,¹⁵ of vairur blo¹⁶?'

'No, þu havest wel scharpe clawe,
 Ne kep¹⁷ Ich noȝt þat þu me clawe;
 þu havest clivers suþe stronge,
 þu tuengst¹⁸ þarmid so doþ a tonge.
 þu poȝtest, so doþ þine ilike,¹⁹
 Mid faire worde me biswike²⁰;
 Ich nolde don þat þu me rad[d]est,²¹
 Ich wiste wel þat þu me misraddest.
 Schamie þe for þin unrede²²!
 Unwrogen²³ is þi svikelhede²⁴!
 Schild þine svikeldom vram þe liȝte,
 And hud²⁵ þat woȝe²⁶ amon[g] þe riȝte.
 Wane²⁷ þu wilt þin unriȝt²⁸ spene,²⁹
 Loke þat hit ne bo isene,
 Vor svike[l]dom haved schome and hete,³⁰
 Ȝif hit is ope³¹ and underȝete.³²
 Ne speddestu³³ noȝt mid þine unwrenche,³⁴

¹ listened² eyes³ cast down⁴ swollen with anger⁵ puffed with wrath⁶ swallowed⁷ in scorn of her⁸ MS. ȝas (f penciled in margin)⁹ will you not¹⁰ the open¹¹ show¹² MS. þare¹³ which (whether) of us two¹⁴ is¹⁵ hue¹⁶ complexion, appearance (bloom)¹⁷ care, wish¹⁸ press tightly, nip¹⁹ as do those of thy sort²⁰ to deceive, betray²¹ counseled²² ill advice²³ revealed²⁴ treachery²⁵ hide²⁶ wrong²⁷ MS. þane²⁸ injustice, wrong²⁹ spend, show forth³⁰ hate³¹ open, apparent³² perceived³³ you did not succeed³⁴ trick

For Ich am war,¹ and can wel blenche.²
 Ne helpþ nogt þat þu bo to [þ]riste³ :
 Ich wolde vizte bet mid liste.⁴
 þan þu mid al þine strengþe.
 5 Ich habbe on brede⁵ and ech on leng]
 Castel god on mine rise ;
 " Wel figt þat wel figt,"⁶ seiþ þe wise.
 Ac lete we awei þos cheste,⁷
 Vor suiche wordes boþ unwreste⁸ ;
 10 And fo we on⁹ mid rizte dome,¹⁰
 Mid faire worde and mid ysome.¹¹
 þez we ne bo at one acorde,
 We muze bet mid fayre worde,
 Witute cheste, and bute figte,
 15 Plaidi¹² mid foze¹³ and mid rizte,
 And mai hure¹⁴ eiþer wat hi wile
 Mid rizte segge and mid skile.
 þo quap þe hule : ' Wu¹⁵ schal us seme,¹⁶
 þat kunne and wille rixt us deme¹⁷ ? '
 20 ' Ich wot wel,' quap þe niztingale,
 ' Ne þaref¹⁸ þarof bo no tale.¹⁹
 Maister Nichole of Guldeforde,²⁰
 He is wis an war of worde ;
 He is of dome suþe gleu,²¹
 25 And him is loþ evrich unþeu.²²
 He wot insigt in²³ eche songe —
 Wo singet wel, wo singet wronge ;
 And he can schede²⁴ vrom þe rixte
 þat woze,²⁵ þat þuster²⁶ from þe lizte.²⁷

¹ wary, cautious² avoid by shrinking³ bold⁴ cunning⁵ breadth⁶ cf. *Proverbs of Hendyng*,
st. 10 (Harl. MS.)⁷ let us be done with this strife⁸ unavailing ; MS. unwerste⁹ let us begin¹⁰ judgment¹¹ peaceable¹² debate¹³ propriety¹⁴ of us¹⁵ who ; MS. þu¹⁶ reconcile¹⁷ judge¹⁸ need¹⁹ dispute²⁰ Nicholas of Guildford, spoken
of in lines 1752-3 of the
poem as living at Port-
esham, in Dorset²¹ wise, prudent²² vice, bad habit²³ has intelligence in, knows²⁴ separate, distinguish²⁵ wrong²⁶ darkness

þo hule one wile hi biþogte,¹
 And after þan þis word upbrohte:
 'Ich granti wel þat he us deme,
 Vor þeȝ he were wile² brene,³
 And lof⁴ him were niȝtingale,
 And oþer wiȝte⁵ gente and smale,
 Ich wot he is nu suþe acoled.⁶
 Nis he vor þe noȝt afoled,⁷
 þat he, for þine olde lufe,
 Me adun⁸ legge⁹ and þe buve;
 Ne schaltu nevre so him queme¹⁰
 þat he for þe fals dom deme.
 He is him ripe¹¹ and fastrede,¹²
 Ne lust¹³ him nu to none unrede¹⁴;
 Nu him ne lust na more pleie,
 He wile gon a¹⁵ riȝte weie.¹

þe niȝtingale was al ȝare,¹⁶
 Ho hadde ilorned¹⁷ wel aiware¹⁸;
 'Hule,' ho sede, 'seie me soþ,
 Wi dostu þat unwiȝtis¹⁹ doþ?
 þu singist aniȝt and noȝt adai,
 And al þi song is "Wailawai!"
 þu miȝt mid þine songe afere²⁰
 Alle þat ihereþ þine ibere²¹;
 þu schrichest²² and ȝollest²³ to þine fere,²⁴
 þat hit is grislich²⁵ to ihere;
 Hit þincheþ²⁶ boþe wise and snepe,²⁷
 Noȝt þat þu singe, ac þat þu wepe.
 þu fligst aniȝt and noȝt adai;

¹ bethought herself for
a time

² at one time

³ spirited, passionate

⁴ dear

⁵ creatures

⁶ much cooled

⁷ befooled

⁸ below

⁹ would place (lay)

¹⁰ please

¹¹ mature

¹² of firm purpose

¹³ pleases

¹⁴ unwise action

¹⁵ in

¹⁶ ready

¹⁷ learned

¹⁸ nearly everywhere (OE.

æghwær)

¹⁹ monsters

²⁰ terrify

²¹ noise, clamor

²² screechest; MS. schirchest

²³ call out

²⁴ companion

²⁵ horrible

²⁶ MS. þinchest

²⁷ to wise and to foolish

parof Ich wndri,¹ and wel mai,
 Vor evrich þing þat schuniet² riht,
 Hit luveþ þuster and hatiet³ ligȝt;
 And evrich þing þat is lof misdede,⁴
 5 Hit luveþ þuster to⁵ his dede.
 A wis word, þeȝ hit bo unclene,
 Is fele manne⁶ a muþe⁷ imene,⁸
 For Alvred King hit seide and wrot:
 "He schunet þat hine wl wot."⁹
 10 Ich wene þat þu dost also,
 Vor þu flizȝt niȝtes evermo.
 Anoþer þing me is awene¹⁰ —
 þu havest anigt wel briȝte sene¹¹;
 Bi daie þu art stareblind,¹²
 15 þat þu ne sichst ne bo[u] ne rind.¹³
 Adai þu art blind oþer bisne,¹⁴
 þarbi men segget a uorbisne:
 "Riȝt so hit farþ bi þan ungode,
 þat noȝt ne suþ to¹⁵ none gode,
 20 And is so ful of uvele wrenche¹⁶
 þat him ne mai no man atwrenche,¹⁷
 And can¹⁸ wel þane¹⁹ þustre²⁰ .wai,
 And þane briȝte lat awai.²¹ "
 So doþ þat boþ²² of þine cunde,
 25 Of ligȝte nabbeþ hi none imunde.²³ "
 þos hule luste suþe longe,
 And was oftoneȝ²⁴ suþ[e] stronge.
 Ho quap: "þu [h]attest²⁵ niȝtingale;
 þu miȝtest bet hoten²⁶ galegale,²⁷

¹ wonder² shuns³ hates⁴ to which evil-doing is dear⁵ for⁶ of many men⁷ in the mouths⁸ commonly⁹ that which knows him to¹⁰ is in my thoughts¹¹ power of vision¹² purblind¹³ see neither bough nor bark¹⁴ of dim sight¹⁵ looks toward¹⁶ guile, trickery¹⁷ evade, elude; MS. -prenche¹⁸ knows²⁰ dark; MS. þurste²¹ abandons the bright o²² those that are²³ thought²⁴ irritated²⁵ are called²⁶ better be called²⁷ chatterbox

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE

Vor þu havest to monie tale,¹
 Lat þine tunge habbe spale²!
 Þu wenest þat þes dai bo þin oge³;
 Lat me nu habbe mine þroge⁴;
 Bo nu stille and lat me speke,
 Ich wille bon of þe awreke.⁵
 And lust⁶ hu Ich con me bitelle,⁷
 Mid rihte soþe, witute spelle.⁸
 Þu seist þat Ich me hude adai,
 Þarto ne segge Ich nich ne nai⁹;
 And lust, Ich telle þe warevore,
 Al wi hit is and warevore.
 Ich habbe bile stif and stronge,
 And gode clivers scharp and longe,
 So hit bicumep¹⁰ to havekes cunne;
 Hit is min higte,¹¹ hit is mi wune,¹²
 þat Ich me drage¹³ to mine cunde,
 Ne mai [me] no man þarevore schende¹⁴;
 On me hit is wel isene,
 Vor rihte cunde¹⁵ Ich am so kene.
 Vorþi Ich am loþ smale fogle¹⁶
 þat floþ bi¹⁷ grunde an bi þuuele¹⁸;
 Hi me bichernet¹⁹ and bigredeþ,²⁰
 And hore²¹ flockes to me ledeþ.
 Me is lof to habbe reste,
 And sitte stille in mine neste;
 Vor nere Ich never no þe betere,
 3if²² Ich mid chavling²³ and mid chatere
 Hom schende, and mid fule worde. . . .
 Ne lust me²⁴ wit þe screwen²⁵ chide,²⁶

1 tales
 2 respite, rest
 3 own
 4 turn
 5 avenged
 6 listen
 7 justify
 8 a long story
 9 no nor nay

10 is fitting
 11 joy
 12 delight
 13 turn me
 14 blame, revile
 15 from very nature
 16 to small birds
 17 near
 18 bushes

19 scream at
 20 cry out upon
 21 their
 22 MS. þif
 23 scolding
 24 it does not please me
 25 evil persons
 26 to contend

20

25

30

Forþi Ich wende¹ from hom wide.²

Hit is a wise monne dome,³

And hi hit segget wel ilome,⁴

þat me ne⁵ chide wit þe gidie,⁶

5 Ne wit þan ofne⁷ me ne zonie.⁸

At sume siþe herde I telle .

Hu Alvred sede on his spelle⁹ :

" Loke þat þu ne bo þare

þar¹⁰ chavling boþ and cheste gare ;

10 Lat sottes¹¹ chide, and vorþ þu go " ;

And Ich am wis, and do also.

And get Alvred seide, an oþer side,¹²

A word þat is isprunge¹³ wide :

" þat wit þe fule haveþ imene,¹⁴

15 Ne cumeþ he never from him cleine."

Wenestu þat haveck bo þe worse

þoȝ crowe bigrede¹⁵ him bi þe mershe,

And goþ to him mid hore chirme¹⁶

Rigt so hi wille wit him schirme¹⁷ ?

20 þe havec folȝeþ gode rede,¹⁸

And fligt his wei, and lat him¹⁹ grede.²⁰

Ȝet þu me seist of oþer þinge,

And telst þat Ich ne can noȝt singe,

Ac al mi rorde²¹ is woning,²²

25 And to ihire grislich²³ þing.

þat nis noȝt soþ, Ich singe efne,²⁴

Mid fulle dreame²⁵ and lude stefne.²⁶

þu wenist²⁷ þat ech song bo grislich

¹ turn

² far

³ in the judgment of wise men

⁴ often

⁵ they do not

⁶ foolish

⁷ oven, furnace

⁸ yawn

⁹ instruction

¹⁰ where

¹¹ fools

¹² on the other hand

¹³ spread

¹⁴ he who has companionship
with the foul

¹⁵ cry out upon

¹⁶ uproar

¹⁷ fight

¹⁸ counsel

¹⁹ MS. him

²⁰ cry out

²¹ speech

²² lamenting

²³ horrible

²⁴ evenly

²⁵ melody

²⁶ voice

²⁷ thinkest

þat þine pipinge nis ilich.¹
 Mi stefne is bold ² and nogt unorne,³
 Ho is ilich one grete horne,
 And þin is ilich one pipe
 Of one smale wode ⁴ unripe. 5
 Ich singe bet þan þu dest;
 þu chaterest so doþ on Irish prost.
 Ich singe an eve, a riȝte time,⁶
 And soþþe won hit is bedtime,
 þe þridde siþe at ⁶ middelnȝte; 10
 And so Ich mine song adiȝte ⁷
 Wone Ich iso ⁸ arise vorre ⁹
 Oþer dairim ¹⁰ oþer daisterre.
 Ich do god mid mine þrote,
 And warni men to hore note.¹¹ 15
 Ac þu singest alle longe niȝt,
 From eve fort ¹² hit is dailiȝt,
 And evre seist þin o song
 So longe so þe niȝt is long;
 And evre croweþ þi wrecche crei,¹³ 20
 þat he ne swikeþ ¹⁴ niȝt ne dai.
 Mid þine pipinge þu adunest ¹⁵
 þas monnes earen þar þu wunest,
 And makest þine song so unwrþ ¹⁶
 þa[t] me ne telþ of þar noȝ[t] wrþ.¹⁷ 25
 Evrich murȝþe ¹⁸ mai so longe ileste,
 þat ho shal liki ¹⁹ wel unwreste,²⁰
 Vor harpe, and pipe, and fugeles songe
 Mislikeþ, ȝif hit is to long.
 Ne bo þe song never so murie, 30

¹ is not like² MS. blod³ feeble⁴ weed⁵ in the evening, at the proper time⁶ MS. ad⁷ arrange, prepare⁸ see⁹ afar¹⁰ daybreak¹¹ profit, advantage¹² until¹³ crying¹⁴ ceases¹⁵ dinnest¹⁶ unworthy¹⁷ that men set no store by it¹⁸ joy¹⁹ please²⁰ ill

pat he ne shai pincne ²wei unnu
 Ȝef he ilestep ³over wille ⁴;
 So þu migt þine song aspille.⁵

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Until 1906, the work called *The Vision* (rather, *Book*) of *William concerning Piers the Plowman* had been for a generation attributed, on the faith of two fifteenth-century memoranda, to William Langland, or Langley, whom Skeat believed to have been born about 1332, and to have died about 1400. Three texts of the poem have been printed, of which the second and third (known as B and C) are revisions and extensions of the first (A). The dates assigned to these are: A, 1362; B, 1377; C, after 1390 (probably about 1398). The A-text has 2567 lines, the B-text 7242, and the C-text 7357. All have been edited by Skeat in two volumes (Oxford, 1886).

Professor John M. Manly presents his view, which differs in many respects from that hitherto received, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 2. According to him, the twelve cantos, or passus, contained in A, were the work of two different authors, of whom the second wrote Passus 9-12, while B and C represent two revisions, so that there would have been four authors; but since he finds 61 lines at the end of the A-text (12. 57-105, and 12 lines not given in Skeat's large edition, 1. 331) to have been written by a certain John But (or Butt), the whole number of authors would be five.

On the theory of the single authorship, Jusserand has an illuminating chapter in Vol. 1 of his *Literary History of the English People*. For a general bibliography, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 2. 490-7.

The passages given below are all from the B-text. They differ so considerably from the A-text that Manly's characterization of the style of the latter sufficiently holds concerning them (*op. cit.* p. 13): 'As to the style, no summary or paraphrase can reproduce its picturesqueness and verve. It is always simple, direct, evocative of a constant series of clear and sharply-defined images of individuals and groups. Little or no attempt is made at elaborate, or even ordinarily full, description, and color-words are singularly few; but it would be difficult to find a piece of writing from which the reader derives a clearer vision of individuals or groups of moving figures in their habit as they lived. That the author was endowed in the highest degree with the faculty of visualization is proved, not merely by his ability to stimulate the reader to form mental images, but even more by the fact that all the movements of individuals and groups can be followed with ease and certainty. Composition, in the larger sense of structural excellence, that quality common in French literature.

¹ seem

² unpleasant

³ lasts

⁴ beyond (the point of) pleasure; MS. unwill

⁵ spoil

but all too rare in English, and supposed to be notably lacking in Piers the Plowman, is one of the most striking features.'

Our text is from Skeat's smaller edition, based on MS. Laud 581, with certain omitted lines supplied from the large edition; with the omission of the dots which mark the middle of lines; and with changes in punctuation, capitalization, and the joining of words. The lines quoted are Prol. 1-122; 3. 1-129, 133-68; 5. 304-46, 352-9, 364-71; 5. 392-478; 6. 107-53.

PROLOGUE

In a somer seson, whan soft was the sonne,
I shope¹ me in shroudes,² as I a shepe³ were;
In habite as an heremite, unholy of workes,
Went wyde in þis world, wondres to here.

Ac on a May mornynge, on Malverne hilles,⁴
Me byfel a ferly⁵ — of fairy, me thougte;
I was wery, forwandred,⁶ and went me to reste
Under a brode banke, bi a bornes⁷ side;
And as I lay and lened, and loked in þe wateres,
I slombred in a slepyng — it sweyved⁸ so merye.

Thanne gan I to meten⁹ a merveilouse swevene,
That I was in a wildernesse — wist I never where;
As I bihelde into þe est, an hiegh¹⁰ to þe sonne,
I seigh a toure on a toft,¹¹ trielich¹² ymaked;
A depe dale binethe, a dongeon þereinne,
With depe dyches and derke, and dredful of sight.
A faire felde ful of folke fonde I there bytwene,
Of alle maner of men — þe mene and þe riche —
Worchyng and wandryng, as þe worlde asketh.¹³

Some putten hem¹⁴ to þe plow, played ful selde¹⁵;
In setting¹⁶ and in sowyng swonken¹⁷ ful harde,
And wonnen that¹⁸ wastours¹⁹ with glotonye destruyeth.

¹ robed

² rough garments

³ shepherd

⁴ hills; the Malvern hills are
in Worcestershire, on the
border of Herefordshire

⁵ marvel

⁶ worn out with wandering

⁷ burn's, brook's

⁸ rippled

⁹ dream

¹⁰ on high

¹¹ hilltop

¹² excellently

¹³ requires, demands

¹⁴ set themselves

¹⁵ seldom

¹⁶ planting

¹⁷ labored

¹⁸ gained what

¹⁹ spendthrifts

And some putten hem to pruyde — apparailed hem þereafter¹
In contenance² of clothyng comen disguised.

In prayers and in penance putten hem manye,
Al for love of owre Lorde lyveden ful streyte,³
5 In hope for to have heveneriche⁴ blisse;
As ancre⁵ and heremites that holden hem in here selles,
And coveiten nought in contre to kairen aboute⁶
For no likerous lifode,⁷ her lykam⁸ to plesse.

And somme chosen chaffare⁹; they cheven¹⁰ the bettere —
10 As it semeth to owre sygt that suche men thryveth;
And somme murthes to make, as mynstralles conneth,¹¹
And geten gold with here glee — giltles, I leve.¹²
Ac japers¹³ and jangelers,¹⁴ Judas chylderen,
Feynen hem fantasies, and foles hem maketh,
15 And han here witte at wille, to worche, gif þei sholde;
That Poule precheth of hem I nel nought preve it here:
Qui turpiloquium loquitur is Luciferes hyne.¹⁵

Bidders¹⁶ and beggeres fast aboute gede,¹⁷
With her belies and her bagges of bred ful ycrammed;
20 Fayteden¹⁸ for here fode, fougten atte ale;
In glotonye, God it wote, gon hii to bedde,
And risen with ribaudye,¹⁹ tho Roberdes knaves;
Slepe and sori sleuthe²⁰ seweth²¹ hem evre.

Pilgrymes and palmers plighted hem togidere
25 To seke Seynt James,²² and seyntes in Rome.
Thei went forth in here wey, with many wise tales,

¹ accordingly² outward appearance³ strictly⁴ of the kingdom of heaven⁵ anchorites⁶ go about⁷ dainty living⁸ body⁹ a merchant's life¹⁰ achieved, prospered¹¹ know how to do¹² believe¹³ jesters¹⁴ jongleurs¹⁵ servant¹⁶ beggars¹⁷ went¹⁸ begged deceitful¹⁹ ribaldry, sin²⁰ sloth²¹ pursue²² St. James of Compostela

17. *Qui . . . loquitur*: this is not from St. Paul; but it bears some resemblance to Eph. 5. 4 and Col. 3. 8.

22. Roberdes knaves: the so-called Roberts men were robbers and vagabonds (perhaps originally Robin Hood's men).

And hadden leve to lye al here lyf after.
 I seigh somme that seiden þei had ysougt seyntes;
 To eche a tale þat þei tolde here tonge was tempred to lye
 More þan to sey soth, it semed bi here speche.

Heremites on an heep,¹ with hoked staves,
 Wenten to Walsyngham,² and here wenches after;
 Grete lobyys³ and longe, that loth were to swynke,
 Clotheden hem in copis,⁴ to ben knowen fram othere,
 And shopen⁵ hem heremites, here ese to have.

I fonde þere freris — alle þe foure ordres
 Preched þe peple for profit of hemselven;
 Glosed⁶ þe gospel as hem good lyked,⁷
 For coveitise of copis construed it as þei wolde.
 Many of þis maistres freris mowe clothen hem at lykyng,
 For here money and marchandise marchen togideres;
 For sith Charite haþ be chapman,⁸ and chief to shryve lordes,
 Many ferlis han fallen in a fewe ȝeris.
 But⁹ Holy Chirche and hii holde better togideres,
 The most myschief on molde¹⁰ is mountyng wel faste.

Þere preched a pardonere, as he a prest were;
 Brouȝte forth a bulle¹¹ with bishopes seles,
 And seide þat hymself myȝte assoilen¹² hem alle
 Of falshed, of fastyng, of vowes ybroken.
 Lewed men leved hym wel, and lyked his wordes;
 Comen up knelyng, to kissen his bulles;
 He bonched¹³ hem with his brevet,¹⁴ and blered here eyes,
 And rauȝte¹⁵ with his ragman¹⁶ rynges and broches;
 Thus þey given here golde, glotones to kepe,

5

10

15

20

25

¹ in great numbers

² to the shrine of Our Lady
of Walsingham—a popular
pilgrimage

³ lubbers

⁴ friars' capes or cloaks

⁵ made

⁶ glossed, commented on

⁷ pleased them well

⁸ love has become a trades-
man

⁹ unless

¹⁰ on the earth

¹¹ a papal bull

¹² absolve

¹³ banged, beat

¹⁴ letter of indulgence

¹⁵ obtained

¹⁶ bull

ro. four ordres: the four orders of friars were the Carmelites (white friars), Augustines (Austin friars), Dominicans (black friars), and Minorites (gray friars).

And leveth¹ such loseles² þat lecherye haunten.³
 Were þe bischop yblissed,⁴ and worth bothe his eres,
 His seel shulde nougt be sent to deceyve þe peple;
 Ac it is naugt by⁵ þe bischop þat þe boy precheth,
 5 For the parisch prest and þe pardonere parten þe silver
 That þe poraille⁶ of þe parisch sholde have, gif þei nere.⁷

Persones⁸ and parisch prestes pleyned hem to þe bischop
 þat here parissches were pore, sith þe pestilence-tyme,
 To have a lycence and a leve at London to dwelle,
 10 And syngen þere for symonye — for silver is swete.

Bischopes and bachelers,⁹ bothe maistres and doctours,
 þat han cure¹⁰ under Criste, and crounyng¹¹ in tokne
 And signe þat þei sholden shryven here paroschienes,
 Prechen and prey for hem, and þe pore fede,
 15 Liggen in London — in Lenten, an elles.¹²
 Somme serve þe kyng, and his silver tellen¹³;
 In Cheker¹⁴ and in Chancerye chalengen¹⁵ his dettes
 Of wardes¹⁶ and wardmotes,¹⁷ weyves and streyves.¹⁸
 And some serve as servantz lordes and ladyes,
 20 And in stede of stuwardes sytten and demen.¹⁹
 Here messe and here matynes, and many of here oures,²⁰
 Arn don undevoutlych; drede is at þe laste
 Lest Crist in consistorie²¹ acorse ful manye.

I parceyved of þe power þat Peter had to kepe,
 25 To bynde and to unbynde, as þe boke telleth,²²
 How he it left wip love, as owre Lorde hight,²³
 Amonges foure vertues — þe best of all vertues,
 þat cardinales ben called, and closyng gatis²⁴ —

¹ believe² wretches (vagabonds)³ practise⁴ a holy (blessed) man⁵ concerning⁶ poor people⁷ if it were not for them⁸ parsons⁹ young men¹⁰ a charge¹¹ the tonsure¹² and at other times¹³ count¹⁴ the court of the Exchequer¹⁵ claim¹⁶ wardships¹⁷ ward-courts¹⁸ waifs and strays — abandoned property or that for which there were no heirs¹⁹ judge²⁰ canonical hours²¹ court, tribunal; here, judgment²² Matt. 16. 19²³ bade²⁴ with power to close gates because 'cardinal' derived from 'card' hinge

þere Crist is in kyngdome to close and to shutte,
 And to opne it to hem, and hevene blisse shewe.
 Ac of þe cardinales atte courte ¹ þat caugt of ² þat name,
 And power presumed in hem a Pope to make,
 To han þat power þat Peter hadde, impugnen I nelle,³
 For in love and letterure ⁴ þe eleccioun bilongeth;
 Forþi I can and can nauȝte ⁵ of courte speke more.

þanne come þere a kyng — knyȝthod hym ladde;
 Miȝt of þe comunes made hym to regne;
 And þanne cam Kynde Wytte,⁶ and clerkes he made,
 For to conseillean þe kyng, and þe comune save.

♦ The kyng and knyȝthode, and clergie bothe,
 Casten ⁷ þat þe comune shulde hemself fynde.⁸
 þe comune contrevēd ⁹ of Kynde Witte craftes,
 And for profit of alle þe poeple, plowmen ordeygned,
 To tilie ¹⁰ and travaile, as Trewe Lyf askeþ.
 þe kyng and þe comune, and Kynde Witte þe thridde,
 Shope ¹¹ lawe and lewte — eche man to knowe his owne.

MEED THE MAIDEN

Now is Mede ¹² þe mayde, and na mo of hem alle,
 With bedellus ¹³ and wiþ bayllyves brouȝt bifor þe kyng.
 The kyng called a clerke — can I nouȝt his name —
 To take Mede þe mayde, and make hire at ese.
 'I shal assaye hir myself, and sothelich appose ¹⁴
 What man of þis molde þat hire were leveste ¹⁵;
 And if she worche bi my witte, and my wille folwe,
 I wil forgyve hir þis gilte, so me God help!'
 Curteysliche þe clerke þanne, as þe kyng hight,

¹ at the court of Rome² received³ I will not raise question⁴ learning⁵ can because of what he knows, but cannot because of his reverence⁶ common sense⁷ contrived⁸ provide food for themselves⁹ devised¹⁰ till, cultivate¹¹ created¹² bribery, 'graft'¹³ beadles, summoners¹⁴ inquire¹⁵ dearest

Toke Mede bi þe middel,¹ and brougte hir into chaumbre,
And þere was myrthe and mynstralcy, Mede to plesse.

They þat wonyeth in Westmynstre worschipped hir alle,
Gentelliche, wiþ joye; þe justices somme²

Busked³ hem to þe boure⁴ þere þe birde⁵ dwelled,

To conforte hire kyndely, by clergise⁶ leve,

And seiden: 'Mourne nought, Mede, ne make þow no sorwe,

For we wil wisse⁷ þe kynge, and þi wey shape

To be wedded at þi wille, and where þe leve liketh,⁸

For al Conscience caste⁹ or craft, as I trowe!⁹

Mildeliche Mede þanne mercyed¹⁰ hem alle

Of þeire gret goodnesse, and gaf hem uchone

Coupes¹¹ of clene golde, and coppis¹² of silver,

Rynges with rubies, and riches manye;

The leste man of here meyne¹³ a motoun¹⁴ of golde.

Thanne laugte¹⁵ þei leve, þis lordes, at¹⁶ Mede.

With that comen clerkis to conforte hir þe same,

And beden hire be blithe — 'for we beth þine owne,

For to worche þi wille þe while þow mygte laste.'¹⁷

Hendeliche¹⁷ heo þanne bihight¹⁸ hem þe same,

To 'love þow lelli,¹⁹ and lordes to make,

And in þe consistorie atte courte do calle²⁰ þowre names;

Shal no lewdnesse lette²¹ þe leode²² þat I lovy, e,

That he ne worth first avanced — for I am biknowen²³ —

þere konnyng²⁴ clerkes shul klokke²⁵ bihynde.'

þanne come þere a confessoure, coped as a frere;

To Mede þe mayde he mellud²⁶ þis wordes,

And seide ful softly — in shrifte²⁷ as it were:

¹ waist

² some of them

³ hastened

⁴ bower, lady's chamber

⁵ lady

⁶ learning's

⁷ guide

⁸ you please

⁹ conscience's contrivance

¹⁰ thanked

¹¹ bowls

¹² cups

¹³ household

¹⁴ a French gold coin worth
about five shillings,
stamped with the impres-
sion of the Lamb of God

¹⁵ took

¹⁶ of

¹⁷ courteously

¹⁸ promised

¹⁹ loyally

²⁰ cause to be called

²¹ ignorance hinder

²² man

²³ well-known

²⁴ wise, learned

²⁵ limp, hobble

²⁶ spoke

²⁷ confession

'þeiȝ lewed men and lered¹ men had leyne by þe bothe,
 And Falsenesse haved yfolwed þe al þis fyfty wyntre,
 I shal assoille þe myselve for a seme² of whete,
 And also be þi bedeman,³ and bere wel þi message
 Amonges knyȝtes and clerkis, Conscience to torne.⁴' 5
 Thanne Mede for here mysdedes to þat man kneled,
 And shrove hire of hire shrewednesse⁵ — shamelees, I trowe;
 Tolde hym a tale, and toke⁶ hym a noble,⁷
 For to ben hire bedeman, and hire brokour als.⁸

Thanne he assoilled hir sone; and sithen he seyde: 10
 'We han a wyndowe a wirchyng⁹ wil sitten us ful heigh¹⁰;
 Woldestow glase¹¹ þat gable, and grave þereinne þi name,
 Siker¹² sholde þi soule be hevene to have.'
 'Wist I that,' quod þat womman, 'I wolde nouȝt spare
 For to be ȝowre frende, frere, and faille ȝow nevre, 15
 Whil ȝe love lordes þat lechery haunteth,
 And lakketh nouȝt ladis þat loveth wel the same.
 It is frelete of flesh — ȝe fynde it in bokes —
 And a course of kynde¹³ wherof we komen alle;
 Who may scape þe sklaundre,¹⁴ þe skathe¹⁵ is sone amended; 20
 It is synne of þe sevene sonnest¹⁶ releessed.¹⁷
 Have mercy,' quod Mede, 'of men þat it haunte,
 And I shal kevre¹⁸ ȝowre kirke, ȝowre cloystre do maken,
 Woves¹⁹ do whiten, and wyndowes glasen,
 Do peynten and purtraye, and paye for þe makynge, 25
 That evry segge²⁰ shal seyn I am sustre of ȝowre hous.'

Ac God to alle good folke suche gravynge defendeth,²¹
 To writen in wyndowes of here wel²² dedes,

¹ learned² load³ beadsman⁴ defeat⁵ sin⁶ gave⁷ a third of a pound sterling⁸ broker also⁹ in process of being made¹⁰ cost us full dear¹¹ provide the glass for¹² certain¹³ nature¹⁴ disgrace¹⁵ harm¹⁶ soonest¹⁷ forgiven¹⁸ cover¹⁹ walls²⁰ person²¹ forbids²² good

26. sustre: any wealthy person could belong to a religious order of friars through a 'letter of fraternity.'

On aventure¹ pruyde be peynted pere, and pompe of þe worlde;
 For Crist knoweþ þi conscience and þi kynde wille,²
 And þi coste,³ and þi coveitise, and who þe catel ougte.⁴
 Forþi I lere⁵ ȝow, lordes, leveþ suche werkes —

- 5 To writen in wyndowes of ȝowre wel dedes,
 Or to greden⁶ after Goddis men whan ȝe delen doles;
 An aventure ȝe han ȝowre hire here,⁷ and ȝoure hevene als;

*Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra.*⁸

- Lat nouȝte þi left half, late ne rathe,⁹
 10 Wyte what þow worchest with þi riȝt syde;
 For þus, bit¹⁰ þe gospel, gode men do here almesse.
 Meires¹¹ and maceres,¹² that menes¹³ ben bitwene

- þe kyng and þe comune to kepe þe lawes,
 To punyschen on pillories and pynyng-stoles¹⁴
 15 Brewesteres¹⁵ and bakesteres,¹⁶ bocheres and cokes;
 For þise aren men on þis molde þat moste harme worcheth
 To þe pore peple þat parcelmele¹⁷ buggen,¹⁸
 For they poysoun þe peple priveliche¹⁹ and oft;
 Thei ryche²⁰ þorw regraterye,²¹ and rentes hem buggen
 20 With þat þe pore people shulde put in here wombe²²;
 For toke þei on²³ trewly, þei tymbred nouȝt²⁴ so heize,
 Ne bouȝte non burgages,²⁵ be ȝe ful certeyne.
 Ac Mede þe mayde þe maire hath bisouȝte,
 Of alle suche sellers sylver to take,
 25 Or presentz withoute pens, as peces of silver,
 Ringes, or other ricchesse, þe regrateres to maynetene:
 'For my love,' quod that lady, 'love hem uch one,
 And soffre hem to selle somdele²⁶ ageins resoun.'

¹ lest perchance

² natural disposition

³ expenses

⁴ who really owned the property

⁵ teach

⁶ cry after, send for

⁷ Matt. 6. 2

⁸ Matt. 6. 3

⁹ early

¹¹ mayors, magistrates

¹² mace-bearers (officers of the courts)

¹³ intermediaries

¹⁴ stools of punishment

¹⁵ brewers

¹⁶ bakers

¹⁷ in small quantities

¹⁸ buy

²⁰ grow rich

²¹ selling retail

²² stomach

²³ if they took in money

²⁴ would not build

²⁵ town-dwellings

²⁶ somewhat

Salamon þe sage a sarmoun he made,
 For to amende maires, and men þat kepen lawes,
 And tolde hem þis teme,¹ þat I telle thynke :

Ignis decorabit tabernacula eorum qui libenter accipiunt munera, etc
 Amonge þis lettered ledes,² þis Latyn is to mene
 That fyre shal falle, and brenne al to blo askes³
 The houses and þe homes of hem þat desireth
 Giftes or geres-gyves⁴ bicause of here offices.

The kynge fro conseil le cam, and called after Mede,
 And ofsent⁵ hir alswythe⁶ with serjauntes manye,
 That brougten hir to bowre with blisse and with joye.

Curteisliche þe kynge þanne comsed⁸ to telle —

To Mede þe mayde melleth⁹ þise wordes :

'Unwittily, womman, wrougte hastow oft,

Ac worse wrougtestow nevre þan þo¹⁰ þow Fals toke¹¹;

But I forgyve þe þat gilte, and graunte þe my grace;

Hennes to þi deth-day do so na more.

I have a knygte, Conscience, cam late fro bigunde¹²;

Ȝif he wilneth þe to wyf, wyltow hym have?'

'Ȝe, lorde,' quod þat lady, 'Lorde forbede elles !

But¹³ I be holely at gowre heste, lat hange¹⁴ me sone !'

And þanne was Conscience calde to come and appiere

Bifor þe kynge and his conseil le, as clerkes and othere.

Knelynge, Conscience to þe kynge louted,¹⁵

To wite what his wille were, and what he do shulde.

'Woltow wedde þis womman,' quod þe kynge, 'Ȝif I wil assente —

For she is fayne of þi felawship — for to be þi make¹⁶ ?'

Quod Conscience to þe kynge : 'Cryst it me forbede !

Ar¹⁷ I wedde suche a wyf, wo me bityde !

For she is frele¹⁸ of hir feith, fykel of here speche,

¹ text, theme

² Job 15. 34

³ persons

⁴ livid ashes

⁵ New Year's gifts (extorted
as bribes)

⁶ sent after

⁷ as quickly as possible

⁸ began

⁹ speaks

¹⁰ when

¹¹ took to thee Falsehood

¹² across the sea

¹³ except

¹⁴ have me hange

¹⁵ made obeisance

¹⁶ mate

¹⁷ before

¹⁸ frail

And maketh men mysdo many score tymes ;

Truste of hire tresore treith¹ ful manye.

Wyves and widewes wantounes she techeth,²

And lereth³ hem leccherye that loveth hire giftes.

5 Ȝowre fadre she felled þorw fals biheste,

And hath apoyssounde Popis,⁴ and peired⁵ Holi Cherche.

Is naugt a better baude, bi hym þat me made,

Bitwene hevene and helle — in erthe though men sougte. . . .

Sisoures⁶ and sompnoures⁷ — suche men hir preiseth ;

10 Shireves of shires were shent gif she nere,⁸

For she doþ men lese here londe and here lyf bothe.

She leteth passe prisoneres, and payeth for hem ofte,

And gyveth þe gailers golde and grotes⁹ togideres,

To unfettre þe fals — fle where hym lyketh !

15 And takeþ þe trewe bi þe toppe,¹⁰ and tieth hym faste,

And hangeth hym for hatred þat harme dede nevre.

To be cursed in consistorie she counteth nougte a russhe ;

For she copeth¹¹ þe comissarie, and coteth¹² his clerkis ;

She is assoilled¹³ as sone as herself liketh,

20 And may neize as moche do in a moneth onc¹⁴

As ȝowre secret seel in syx score dayes.

For she is prive¹⁵ with þe Pope — provisoures¹⁶ it knoweth —

For Sire Symonye and herselfe seleth¹⁷ hire bulles.

She blesseth þise bisshopes, þeize þey be lewed,

25 Provendreth persones,¹⁸ and prestes meynnteneth

To have lemmannes and lotebies¹⁹ alle here lifdayes,

And bringen forth barnes agein forbode²⁰ lawes.

There she is wel with þe kyng wo is þe rewme,

¹ betrays

² teaches to be

³ teaches

⁴ poisoned Popes

⁵ injured

⁶ jurymen

⁷ summoners

⁸ would be lost if it were not
for her

⁹ groats

¹⁰ top, head

¹¹ provides a cope for

¹² provides coats for

¹³ absolved

¹⁴ by herself

¹⁵ intimate

¹⁶ provisors (persons named
by the Pope for a living
not vacant)

¹⁷ seal

¹⁸ supports parsons

¹⁹ concubines

²⁰ prohibitive

5. Ȝowre fadre: probably Edward II, father of Edward III (king at the time the first version was written).

For she is favorable to fals,¹ and fouleth Trewthe ofte.
 Bi Jesus, with here Jeweles howre justices she shendeth,²
 And lith³ aȝein þe lawe, and letteth hym þe gate⁴
 That Feith may nouȝte have his forth,⁵ here⁶ florences go so pikke.
 She ledeth þe lawe as hire list, and love-dayes⁷ maketh,
 And doth men lese þow hire love þat lawe myȝte wynne —
 Þe mase⁸ for a mene man, þowȝ he mote⁹ evre.¹⁰
 Lawe is so lordeliche, and loth to make ende,
 Withoute presentz or pens she pleseth wel fewe.
 Barounes and burgeys she bryngeth in sorwe,
 And alle þe comune in kare þat coveyten lyve¹¹ in trewthe,
 For Clergye¹² and Coveitise¹³ she coupleth togideres.
 Þis is þe lyf of that lady — now Lorde gif hir sorwe,
 And alle that meynteneth here men, meschaunce hem bityde!
 For pore men mowe have no powere to pleyne¹⁴ hem, þowȝ þei smerte,
 Suche a maistre is Mede amonge men of gode.'

GLUTTONY

Now bigynneth Gloutoun¹⁵ for to go to schrifte,
 And kaires hym¹⁶ to kirkeward,¹⁷ his coupe¹⁸ to schewe;
 Ac Beton þe brewestere bad hym good morwe,
 And axed of hym with þat whiderward he wolde.
 'To Holi Cherche,' quod he, 'for to here masse,
 And sithen¹⁹ I wil be shryven, and synne na more.'
 'I have gode ale, gossib,' quod she; 'Glotown, wiltow as
 Hastow augte in þi purs²⁰? — any hote spices?'
 'I have peper and piones,²¹' quod she, 'and a pound
 A ferthyngworth of fenel-seed for fastyng-dayes.'

1 MS. the fals
 2 destroys
 3 lies
 4 hinders him the way
 5 egress
 6 her
 7 days for holding court, and
 settling differences

8 disappointment
 9 plead, argue
 10 MS. hir evre
 11 desire to live
 12 Learning
 13 Avarice
 14 make complaint
 15 Glutton

16 repair
 17 to ch
 18 gv
 19 a'
 20 v
 21

þanne goth Glotoun in, and grete othes after ;
Cesse¹ þe souteresse² sat on þe benche,
Watte þe warner³ and hys wyf bothe,
Tymme þe tynkere, and tweyne of his prentis,⁴
5 Hikke þe hakeneyman,⁵ and Hughe þe nedeler,⁶
Clarice of Cokkeslane,⁷ and þe clerke of þe cherche,
Dawe þe dykere,⁸ and a dozeine other ;
Sire Piers of Pridie, and Peronelle⁹ of Flaundres,
A ribibour,¹⁰ a ratonere,¹¹ a rakyer of Chepe,¹²
A ropere,¹³ a redyngkyng,¹⁴ and Rose þe dissheres,¹⁵
Godfrey of Garlekehithe,¹⁶ and Gryfin þe Walshe,¹⁷
And upholderes¹⁸ an hepe erly bi þe morwe
Geven Glotoun with glád chere good ale to hansel.¹⁹
Clement þe cobelere cast of²⁰ his cloke,

For to trye þis chaffare bitwixen hem þre.

Hikke þe hostellere¹ hadde þe cloke,

In covenante þat Clement shulde þe cuppe fille,

And have Hikkes hode hostellere,² and holde hym yserved³;

And whoso repented rathest⁴ shulde arise after,

And grete Sire Glotoun with a galoun ale.

þere was laughyng and louryng,⁵ and 'Let go þe cuppe!'

And seten so til evensonge, and songen umwhile,⁶

Tyl Glotoun had yglobbed⁷ a galoun an a jille.⁸ . . .

He mygte neither steppe ne stonde er he his staffe hadde;

And þanne gan he go liche a glewmannes bicche,⁹

Somme tyme aside, and somme tyme arrere,¹⁰

As whoso leyth lynes for to lacche foules.¹¹

And whan he drowgh to þe dore, þanne dymmed his eighen;

He stumbled on þe thresshewolde, an threwe¹² to þe erthe.

Clement þe cobelere cauhte hym bi þe myddel,

For to lifte hym alofte, and leyde him on his knowes.¹³ . . .

With al þe wo of þis worlde, his wyf and his wenche

Baren hym home to his bedde, and brouhte hym þerinne;

And after al þis excesse, he had an accidie,¹⁴

þat he slepe Saterdag and Sondag til sonne zede¹⁵ to rešte.

þanne waked he of his wynkyng,¹⁶ and wiped his eyghen;

þe fyrste worde þat he warpe¹⁷ was: 'Where is þe bolle¹⁸?''

His wif gan edwite¹⁹ hym þo how wikkedlich he lyved,

And Repentance rihte so rebuked hym þat tyme.

¹ an innkeeper (who also let horses for hire; cf. 346 5, 10)

² the hood of Hikke the innkeeper

³ contented

⁴ soonest

⁵ scowling

⁶ at intervals

⁷ gulped down

⁸ gill

⁹ a (blind) minstrel's dog

¹⁰ backwards

¹¹ catch birds

¹² fell

¹³ knees

¹⁴ fit of sloth

¹⁵ went

¹⁶ slumber

¹⁷ uttered

¹⁸ cup, bowl

¹⁹ reproach

SLOTH THE PARSON

þanne come Sleuthe¹ al bislabeled,² with two slymy eigen,
 'I most sitte,' seyde þe segge,³ 'or elles shulde I nappe;
 I may nougte stonde ne stoupe, ne withoute a stole⁴ knele.
 Were I brougte abedde, . . .

- 5 Sholde no ryngyng do me ryse ar I were rype to dyne.
 He bygan 'Benedicite' with a bolke,⁵ and his brest knocked,
 And roxed⁶ and rored, and rutte⁷ atte laste.
 'What! awake, renke⁸!' quod Repentance, 'and rape⁹ þe to shrifte.'
 'If I shulde deye bi¹⁰ þis day, me liste¹¹ nougte to loke;
 10 I can nougte perfytly my Pater Noster, as þe prest it syngeth,
 But I can rymes of Robyn Hood, and Randolf Erle of Chestre,¹²
 Ac neither of owre Lorde ne of owre Lady, þe leste þat evere was made.

- I have made vowes fourty, and forgete hem on þe morne;
 I parfourned¹³ nevere penaunce, as þe prest me higte,
 15 Ne rygte sori for my synnes zet was I nevere;
 And gif I bidde any bedes,¹⁴ but-if it be in wrath,
 þat I telle with my tonge is two myle fro myne herte.
 I am occupied eche day — haliday and other —
 With ydel tales atte ale, and otherwhile in cherches;
 20 Goddes peyne and his passioun — ful selde þynke I þereon.

- I visited nevere fieble men, ne fettered folke in puttes¹⁵;
 I have levere here an harlotrie,¹⁶ or a somer-game of souteres,¹⁷
 Or lesynges¹⁸ to laughe at, and belye my neighbore,
 þan al þat evere Marke made, Mathew, John, and Lucas;
 25 And vigilies and fastyng-dayes — alle þise late I passe,¹⁹
 And ligge abedde in Lenten, an[d] my lemman in myn armes,
 Tyl matynes and masse be do, and þanne go to þe freres;

¹ sloth² bedabbled³ creature⁴ stool⁵ belch⁶ stretched himself⁷ snored⁸ man⁹ hasten¹⁰ within¹¹ would please¹² 1181-1231¹³ performed¹⁴ offer any petitions¹⁵ dungeons¹⁶ a tale of harlotry¹⁷ summer-game played by
shoemakers, consisting of
athletic sports, etc.¹⁸ lying tales¹⁹ I let pass, pay no heed to

Come I to 'Ite, missa est,'¹ I holde me yserved.²

I nam nougte shryven some tyme — but-if sekenesse it make³ —

Nougt tweies in two zere, and þanne up gesse⁴ I schryve me.

I have be⁵ prest and persoun passynge thretti wynter,

Ȝete can I neither solfe⁶ ne synge, ne seyntes lyves rede ;

But I can fynde in a felde or in a fourlonge⁷ an hare,

Better þan in *Beatus vir*⁸ or in *Beati omnes*⁹

Construe oon clause wel, and kenne¹⁰ it to my parochienes.

I can holde love-dayes, and here a reves rekenynge,

Ac in canoun¹¹ ne in þe decretales¹² I can nougte rede a lyne.

Ȝif I bigge¹³ and borwe¹⁴ it — but-ȝif it be ytailed¹⁵ —

I forȝete it as ȝerne¹⁶ ; and ȝif men me it axe

Sixe sithes or sevene, I forsake¹⁷ it with othes,

And þus tene¹⁸ I trewe men ten hundreth tymes.

And my servauntz — some tyme her salarye is bihynde ;

Reuthe¹⁹ is to here þe rekenynge whan we shal rede acomptes ;

So with wikked wille and wraththe my werkmen I paye.

Ȝif any man doth me a benfait, or helpeth me at nede,

I am unkynde agein²⁰ his curteisye, and can nougte understonde it ;

For I have and have hadde somedeले²¹ haukes maneres :

I nam nougte lured with love, but þere ligge²² aȝte²³ under þe thombe.

The kyndenesse þat myne evene-Cristene²⁴ kidde me fernyere,²⁵

Sixty sythes I, Sleuthe, have forȝete it sith ;

In speche and in sparynge of speche yspilte²⁶ many a tyme

Bothe flesche and fische, and many other vitailles,

Bothe bred and ale, butter, melke, and chese —

Forsleuthed²⁷ in my servyse, til it mygte serve no man.

I ran aboute in ȝouth, and ȝaf me nougte to lerne,

And evere sith have be beggere, for my foule sleuthe ;

¹ the closing words of the mass

² satisfied

³ unless sickness bring it about

⁴ by guesswork

⁵ been

⁶ sol-fa, i.e. sing by note

⁷ lot (of land)

⁸ Ps. i or 112

⁹ Ps. 128

¹⁰ explain

¹¹ canon law

¹² decretals — a collection
of Popes' edicts

¹³ buy anything

¹⁴ give a pledge for it

¹⁵ marked on a tally

¹⁶ quickly (as may be)

¹⁷ deny

¹⁸ injure

¹⁹ pity

²⁰ in response to

²¹ to some extent

²² lie

²³ The lure was often baited
with meat

²⁴ fellow-Christian

²⁵ showed me formerly

²⁶ wasted

²⁷ wasted by carelessness

Hæu michi, quod sterilem vitam, duxi juvenilem !

' Repentestow þe nauhte ? ' quod Repentance, and riȝte with
swowned,

Til *Vigilate*,¹ þe veille,² fette³ water at his eyȝen,

And flatte⁴ it on his face, and faste on hym criede,

5 And seide : ' Ware þe fram Wanhope,⁵ wolde⁶ þe bitraye !

" I am sori for my synnes " — sey so to þiselve,

And bete þiselve on þe breste, and bidde hym⁷ of grace ;

For is no gult⁸ here so grete þat his goodnesse nys more.

þanne sat Sleuthe up, and seyned⁹ hym swithe,¹⁰

10 And made avowe tofore¹¹ God for his foule sleuthe :

' Shal no Sondaye be þis sevene ȝere — but sykenesse it lette¹

þat I ne shal do¹² me er day to þe dere cherche,

And heren matines and masse, as I a monke were ;

Shal none ale¹³ after mete holde me þennes

15 Tyl I have evensonge herde, I behote to þe rode.¹⁴

And ȝete wil I ȝelde aȝein¹⁵ — if I so moche have —

Al þat I wikkedly wan sithen I wytte hadde.

And þough my liflode lakke,¹⁶ leten I nelle¹⁷

þat eche man ne shal have his, ar I hennes wende ;

20 And with þe residue and þe remenaunt, bi þe Rode of Chestre !

I shal seke treuthe arst,¹⁸ ar I se Rome ! '

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Now is Perkyn²⁰ and his pilgrymes to þe plowe faren²¹ ;

To erie²² þis halve-acre holpyn hym manye.

Dikeres and delveres digged up þe balkes²³ ;

25 þerewith was Perkyn apayed,²⁴ and preysed hem faste.

Other werkemen þere were þat wrouȝten ful ȝerne,²⁵

¹ Cf. Mk. 13. 37

² watcher

³ fetched

⁴ dashed

⁵ despair

⁶ who would

⁷ God

⁸ guilt, sin

⁹ signed (crossed)

¹⁰ quickly

¹¹ before

¹² prevent

¹³ betake

¹⁴ alehouse

¹⁵ vow to the cross

¹⁶ repay

¹⁷ means of living fail

¹⁸ cease I will not

¹⁹ first

²⁰ little Piers (Peterkin)

²¹ gone

²² plow

²³ ridges of land left un

²⁴ pleased

²⁵ zealously

PIERS THE PLOWMAN

Eche man in his manere made hymself to done,
 And some, to plesce Perkyn, piked up þe wedes.
 At heighe pryme¹ Peres lete þe plowe stonde,
 To oversen hem hymself; and whoso best wrougte;
 He shulde be huyred þerafter, whan hervest-tyme come.
 And þanne seten somme, and songen attie nale,²
 And hulpen erie his half acre with 'How! trolli-lolli!'
 'Now, bi þe peril of my soule!' quod Pieres al in pure tene³:
 'But ȝe arise þe rather,⁴ and rape⁵ ȝow to worche,
 Shal no greyne þat groweth glade ȝow at nede;
 And þough ȝe deye for dole, þe devel have þat reccheth⁶!'
 'Tho were faitoures⁷ aferde, and feyned hem blynde,
 Somme leyde here legges aliri,⁸ as suche loseles conneth,⁹
 And made her mone to Pieres, and preyde hym of grace:
 'For we have no lymes to laboure with, lorde, ygraced be ȝe!
 Ac we preye for ȝow, Pieres, and for ȝowre plow bothe,
 þat God of his grace ȝowre grayne multiplie,
 And ȝelde ȝow of¹⁰ ȝowre almesse þat ȝe give us here;
 For we may nouȝte swynke ne swete, suche sikenesse us eyleth.'
 'If it be soth,' quod Pieres, 'þat ȝe seyne, I shal it sone asspye!
 Ȝe ben wastoures,¹¹ I wote wel, and Treuthe wote þe sothe!
 And I am his olde hyne,¹² and higte hym to warne
 Which þei were in þis worlde his werkemen appeyred.¹³
 Ȝe wasten þat men wynnen with travaille and with tene,
 c Treuthe shal teche ȝow his teme to dryve,
 r ȝe shal ete barly bred, and of þe broke drynke;
 t if he be blynde or broke-legged, or bolted with ynes,¹⁴
 e shal ete whete bred, and drynke with myselve,
 l God of his goodnesse amendement hym sende.
 ȝe myȝte travaille as Treuthe wolde, and take mete and huyre
 kepe kyne¹⁵ in þe felde, þe corne fro þe bestes,

probably about 9 A.M.
 their ale
 tion, grief
 quickly

him who cares

⁷ vagabonds
⁸ crosswise
⁹ wretched idlers know how
 to do
¹⁰ requite you for
¹¹ spendthrifts

¹² servant
¹³ those who in this world de-
 moralized his workmen
¹⁴ supported with iron supports
¹⁵ cattle

Diken or delven, or dyngen¹ uppon sheves,²
 Or helpe make mortar, or bere mukke afelde.
 In lecherye and in losengerye³ ze lyven, and in sleuthe —
 And al is þorw suffrance þat venjaunce zow ne taketh.
 5 Ac ancras and heremytes, þat eten nogt but at nones,⁴
 And na more er morwe,⁵ myne almesse shul þei have,
 And of my catel⁶ to cope hem with þat han cloistres and cherches.
 Ac Robert Renneaboute shal nowgte have of myne,
 Ne posteles,⁷ but⁸ þey preche conne, and have powere⁹ of þe bisschop;
 10 They shal have payne¹⁰ and potage, and make himself at ese,
 For it is an unresonable religioun þat hath rigte nougte of certeyne.¹¹

PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

Among the poems which owe their origin to *Piers Plowman* is *Piers the Plowman's Creed*, written by an unknown author soon after 1393. It runs thus: An unlearned man who has got by heart the Paternoster and Ave Maria, wishes also to know the Creed, and seeks a teacher. He applies in turn to friars of each of the four orders. Each rails at the other orders, and promises that the questioner shall be saved without knowledge of the Creed, if he contribute to the expenses of the monastery. The man leaves them with indignation at their magnificent buildings and luxurious lives, and finally comes upon a poor plowman, who joins him in invective against friars of all orders. Skeat suggests that the keynote of the poem is to be found at the beginning of Passus 9 (A), 8 (B), 11 (C) of *Piers Plowman*.

This poem was first printed in 1553. Our text, however, is taken, not from that of 1553, but from Skeat's edition (E.E.T.S. 30) of MS. Camb. Trin. Coll. R. 3.15 (adopting Skeat's emendations without comment), which, though later than 1553, he concludes to be based on a much earlier manuscript. Our selections embrace lines 98-137, 153-242, 420-42, 546-64, 719-61, and 775-8.

' Alas! frere,' quap I þo,¹² ' my purpos is ifailed;
 Now is my counfort acast.¹³ Canstou no bote¹⁴ —
 Where Y mygte meten wip a man þat mygte me wissen¹⁵
 15 For to conne my crede, Crist for to folwen? '

¹ thresh² sheaves³ lying, flattering⁴ noon⁵ till the next morning⁶ substance⁷ apostles⁸ unless⁹ license¹⁰ bread, food¹¹ has no established order¹² then¹³ cast away, lost¹⁴ do you know no remedy¹⁵ teach

PIERS THE PLOWMAN'S CREED

'Certeine, felawe,' quap þe frere, 'wipouten any fail
 Of all men opon mold, we Menures¹ most schiewep
 þe pure apostelles life, wip penaunce on erþe,
 And suen² hem in sanctite, and suffren well harde.
 We haunten none tavernes, ne hobelen³ abouten;
 At marketts and myracles⁴ we medlep us nevere;
 We hondlen no money, but menelich⁵ faren,
 And haven hunger at the meate — at ich a mel ones.
 We haven forsaken the worlde, and in wo lybbeþ,⁶
 In penaunce and poverte; and precheþ þe puple,
 By ensample of oure life, soules to helpen;
 And in povertie praien for all oure parteners⁷
 þat gyveþ us any good, God to honouren —
 Oþer bell, oþer booke, or breed to our fode,
 Other catell,⁸ oþer cloth to coveren wip our bones,⁹
 Money, or money-worthe — here mede¹⁰ is in heven.
 For we buldeþ a burwz,¹¹ a brod and a large:
 A chirche and a chapaile, with chambres alofte,
 Wip wide windowes ywrougt, and walles wel heye,
 þat mote bene portreid and paynt, and pulched¹² ful clene;
 With gaie glittering glas, glowing as þe sonne;
 And, myztestou amenden us wip money of þyn owne,
 þou chuldest cnely¹³ bifore Crist in compas¹⁴ of gold,
 In þe wide windowe westwarde — wel nize in the myddell —
 And Seynt Fraunces himself schall folden the in his cope,
 And presente the to the Trynitie, and praie for thy synnes;
 þi name schall noblich ben wryten and wrougt, for the nones,¹⁵
 And, in remembrance of þe, yrade¹⁶ þer for ever.
 And, broþer, be þou nougt aferd; bythenk in thyn herte;
 þouȝ þou conne nougt þi crede, kare þou no more;

10

15

20

25

30

orites
v

le-plays
y

⁷ those who share with us
⁸ property, goods
⁹ our bones with
¹⁰ their reward
¹¹ large convent (*lit.* borough)
¹² polished

¹³ kneel
¹⁴ circle, ring; with this whole
 passage compare *Piers*
Plowman, 341 23-26
¹⁵ for the occasion
¹⁶ read

I schal asoilen¹ þe, syre, and setten it on my soule,
And þou maie maken þis good; þenk þou non oþer.²

'Sire,' Y saide, 'in certaine Y schal gon and asaye.'

And he sette on me his honde, and asoilede me clene;

And þeir Y parted him fro, wiþouten any peine;

In covenant þat Y come agen, Crist he me betauhte.³ . . .

þanne þougȝ Y to frayne⁴ þe first⁵ of þis foure ordirs,

And presede⁶ to þe prechoures to proven⁷ here wille.

Ich higede⁸ to her house to herken of more,

And whan Y cam to þat court, Y gaped aboute.

Swich a bild⁹ bold, ybult opon erþe heigȝte,¹⁰

Say¹¹ I nouȝt in certaine siþþe a longe tyme.

Y ġemedede¹² upon þat house, and ġerne¹³ þeron loked,

Whougȝ¹⁴ þe pileres weren ypeynt and pulched ful clene,

And queynteli icorven wiþ curiouse knottes,¹⁵

Wiþ wyndowes well ywrouȝt, wide up olofte.

And þanne Y entrid in and evenforþ¹⁶ went,

And all was walled þat wone,¹⁷ þougȝ it wid were,

Wiþ posternes in pryvytie¹⁸ to pasen¹⁹ when hem liste,

Orcheȝardes and erberes²⁰ evesed²¹ well clene,

And a curious cros craftly entayled,²²

Wiþ tabernacles²³ ytigt²⁴ to toten²⁵ all abouten.

þe pris²⁶ of a plougȝlond, of²⁷ penyes so rounde,

To aparaile²⁸ þat pyler were pure²⁹ lytel.

þanne Y munte³⁰ me forþ þe mynstre to knowen,

And awaytede a woon³¹ wonderlie well ybeld,³²

¹ absolve

² no otherwise

³ he commended me to Christ

⁴ question

⁵ the Dominicans

⁶ pressed forward, hastened

⁷ make trial of

⁸ hied me

⁹ building

¹⁰ a height of earth, an elevation

¹¹ saw

¹² gazed attentively

¹³ eagerly

¹⁴ how

¹⁵ bosses

¹⁶ straight ahead

¹⁷ dwelling-place

¹⁸ private posterns

¹⁹ go out

²⁰ gardens

²¹ bordered

²² carved

²³ cells

²⁴ fixed, arranged

²⁵ spy

²⁶ price

²⁷ in

²⁸ furnish forth, provide for

²⁹ very

³⁰ ventured

³¹ perceived a building

³² built

Wip arches on everiche half,¹ and belliche² ycorven,
 Wip crochets³ on corners wip knottes of golde;
 Wyde wyndowes ywrougt, ywriuen full pikke,⁴
 Schynen wip schapen scheldes⁵ to schiewen aboute,
 Wip merkes⁶ of marchauntes ymedled⁷ bytwene,
 Mo þan twenty and two twyes ynoubred.
 þer is none heraud⁸ þat hap half swich a rolle—
 Riȝt as a rageman⁹ hadde¹⁰ rekned hem newe.
 Tombes opou tabernacles tyld opou lofte,¹¹
 Housed in hirnes¹² harde set abouten,
 Of armede alabaustre clad for þe nones,
 Made opou marbel in many maner wyse;
 Knyghtes in her conisantes¹³ clad for þe nones;
 All it semed seyntes, ysacred¹⁴ opou erþe,
 And lovely ladies ywrougt leyn by her sydes,
 In many gay garmentes, þat weren goldbeten.¹⁵
 þouȝ þe tax of ten ȝer were trewly ygadered,
 Nolde it nouȝt maken þat hous half, as Y trowe.

þanne kam I to þat cloister and gaped abouten,
 Whouȝ it was pilered and peynt and portred well clene
 All yhyled wip leed¹⁶ lowe to þe stones,
 And ypaved wip peynt til¹⁷ iche poynte¹⁸ after oper;
 Wip kundites¹⁹ of clene tyn²⁰ closed all aboute,
 Wip lavoures²¹ of latun²² lovelyche ygreithed.²³
 I trowe þe gaynage²⁴ of þe ground in a gret schire
 Nolde aparaile þat place oo poynt til other ende.²⁵
 þanne was þe chaptire-hous wrougt as a greet chirche,
 Corven and covered, and queyntliche entayled,²⁶

e
 autifully
 ickets
 h many inscriptions
 its of arms wrought
 nbols, badges
 erspersed
 rald
 talogue
 S. hap

11 set up on high
 12 enclosed in corners
 13 cognizances
 14 sanctified, consecrated
 15 adorned with beaten gold
 16 covered with lead
 17 painted tiles
 18 piece, bit
 19 conduits
 20 tin

21 lavers
 22 latoun, a kind of b
 23 prepared
 24 produce
 25 would not fit out t
 one bit towards
 end
 26 sculptured

Wip semlich selure¹ yset on lofte,
As a Parlement Hous ypeynted aboute.

þanne ferd² Y into fraytour,³ and fond þere anoper,
An halle for an heyȝ kinge an housholde to holden,
Wip brode bordes⁴ aboute ybenched⁵ wel clene,
Wip windowes of glas wrouȝt as a chirche.

• þanne walkede Y ferrer, and went all abouten,
And seiȝ halles ful hyȝe, and houses full noble,

Chambers wip chymneyes, and chapells gaie,

And kychens for an hyȝe kinge in castells to holden,

And her dortour⁶ ydigte⁷ wip dores ful stronge,

Fermery⁸ and fraitur, with fele mo houses,

And a⁹ strong ston wall, sterne opon heiȝe,¹⁰

Wip gaie garites¹¹ and grete, and iche hole yglassed,

And opere houses ynowe to herberwe þe queene;

And ȝet þise bilderes wilne beggen a baggful of wheate

Of a pure pore¹² man þat maie oneȝe¹³ paie

Half his rente in a ȝer, and half ben behynde.

þanne turned Y aȝen, whan Y hadde all ytoted,¹⁴

And fond in a freitour a frere on a benche,

A greet cherl and a grym, growen as a tonne,¹⁵

Wip a face as fat as a full bledder

Blowen bretfull¹⁶ of breȝ, and as a bagge honged¹⁷

On boȝen his chekes, and his chyn wip a chol¹⁸ lollode,¹⁹

As greet as a gos-eye,²⁰ growen all of grece;

þat²¹ all wagged his fleche²² as a quyk myre.²³

His cope þat biclypped²⁴ him, wel clene²⁵ was it folden,

Of double worstede²⁶ ydyȝt,²⁷ down to þe hele;

¹ ceiling

² went

³ the refectory

⁴ tables

⁵ furnished with benches

⁶ dormitory

⁷ provided

⁸ infirmary

⁹ MS. all

¹⁰ stern on a height

¹¹ garrets

¹² very poor

¹³ with difficulty

¹⁴ observed

¹⁵ as large as a tun

¹⁶ brimful

¹⁷ it hung

¹⁸ jowl

¹⁹ wagged about

²⁰ goose-egg

²¹ so that

²² flesh

²³ like a quagmire

²⁴ covered

²⁵ neatly

²⁶ Cf. Chaucer, *Prolog.*

²⁷ made

Men mygte reken ich a ryb,¹ so reufuli² þey weren.
 His wiif walked him wip, wip a longe gode,³
 In a cutted⁴ cote⁵ cutted full heyge,
 Wrapped in a wynwe-schete⁶ to weren⁷ hire fro weders,⁸
 5 Barfote on þe bare iis, þat þe blod folwede.
 And at þe londes⁹ ende laye a litell crombolle,¹⁰
 And þeron lay a litell childe, lapped in cloutes,
 And tweyne of tweie geres olde, opon anoper syde;
 And alle þey songen o songe, þat sorwe was to heren;
 10 þey crieden alle o cry — a carefull¹¹ note.
 Þe sely man sizede sore, and seide: 'Children, bep stille.'¹² . . .

Loke nowe, leve¹² man, bep nougt þise ilke
 Fully to þe Farisens¹³ in fele¹⁴ of þise poyntes?

Al her brod beldyng¹⁵ ben belded withe synne,

15 And in worchipe of þe werlde her wynnyng þei holden.

Þei schapen her chapolories,¹⁶ and streccheþ hem brode,¹⁷

And launceþ¹⁸ heige her hemmes wip babelyng,¹⁹ in stretes;

Þei ben ysewed wip whigt silk, and semes full queynte,

Ystongen²⁰ wip stiches þat stareþ as silver.

20 And but²¹ freres ben first yset at sopers and at festes,

Þei wiln ben wonderly wroþ, ywis, as Y trowe;

But þey ben at þe lordes borde, louren²² þey willeþ,

He mot bygynne þat borde,²³ a beggere²⁴ — wip sorwe²⁵! —

And first sitten in se²⁶ in her synagoges,²⁷

25 þat bep here heyge hellehous of Kaymes²⁸ kynde;

For þouz a man in her mynster a masse wolde heren,

His sigt schal so be set on sundrye werkes,

¹ count each rib

² miserable, sorry-looking

³ goad

⁴ cut short

⁵ skirt, petticoat

⁶ a sheet used in winnowing corn

⁷ protect

⁸ storms

⁹ strip's

¹⁰ crumb-bowl

¹² dear

¹³ Pharisees

¹⁴ many

¹⁵ building

¹⁶ scapulars

¹⁷ Matt. 23. 5-7

¹⁸ fling

¹⁹ babbling

²⁰ pricked through

²¹ unless

²² look sourly

²⁴ beggar that he is (perha
with allusion to the be
ging friars)

²⁵ bad luck to him

²⁶ seat

²⁷ churches

²⁸ Cain's (CAIM = Carmelite
Augustinians, Jacobin
Minorites — the four
ders of friars)

þe penounes,¹ and þe pomels,² and poyntes³ of scheldes
 Wipdrawen his devocion, and dusken⁴ his herte;
 I likne it to a lymgerde⁵ to drawen men to hell. . . .

þei usen russet⁶ also, somme of þis freres,
 þat bitokneþ travaile and trewþe opon erþe.
 Bote loke whou þis lorels⁷ labouren þe erþe,
 But freten⁸ þe frute þat þe folk full lellich biswynkeþ⁹;
 Wip travail of trewe men þei tymbren¹⁰ her houses,
 And of curious¹¹ cloþe her copes þei biggen¹²;
 And als¹³ his getyng is greet he schal ben good holden;
 And rygt as dranes¹⁴ doþ nougt but drynkeþ up þe huny,
 Whan been¹⁵ wiþe her bysynesse han brougt it to hepe,
 Rigt so fareþ freres wip folke opon erþe:
 þey freten up þe fu[r]ste froyt,¹⁶ and falsliche lybbeþ.
 But alle freres eten nougt ylich good mete,
 But after þat his wynnyng is, is his wellfare;
 And after þat he bringeþ home, his bed schal ben grayþed¹⁷;
 And after þat his rychesse is raugt,¹⁸ he schal ben redy served.
 But see þiself in þi sigt whou somme of hem walkeþ
 Wip cloutede¹⁹ schon, and cloþes ful feble,
 Wel neig forwerd,²⁰ and þe wlon²¹ offe;
 And his felawe in a froke worþ swiche fiftene,²²
 Arayd in rede sc[h]on — and elles were reupe²³ —
 And sexe copes or seven in his celle hongep.
 þouȝ for fayling of good his fellawe schulde sterve,²⁴
 He wolde nougt lenen²⁵ him a peny his liif for to holden.
 Y migt tymen þo troiflarden²⁶ to toilen wiþ þe erþe,
 Tylyen,²⁷ and trewliche lyven, and her flech tempren!

monks
 helmets, bosses
 visions
 darken, cloud
 limed twig
 the Franciscans wore gray
 habits originally, but later
 russet-brown
 good-for-nothings
 labour

⁹ faithfully obtain by labor
¹⁰ build
¹¹ MS. þe curious
¹² fashion (?) ; buy (?)
¹³ according as
¹⁴ drones
¹⁵ bees
¹⁶ first-fruits
¹⁷ prepared
¹⁸ reached, obtained

¹⁹ patched
²⁰ worn out
²¹ borders, hems
²² fifteen of such
²³ a pity
²⁴ die
²⁵ lend, give
²⁶ compel the triflers
²⁷ till the ground

- Now mot ich soutere¹ his sone setten to schole,
 And ich a beggers brot² on þe booke lerne,
 And worþ to³ a writere, and wiþ a lorde dwell,
 Oper falsly to a frere, þe fend for to serven.
 5 So of þat beggers brot a bychop schal worþen,
 Among þe peres of þe lond prese⁴ to sitten,
 And lordes sones lowly to þo losells aloute⁵;
 Knyghtes croukep⁶ hem to, and cruchep⁷ full lowe;
 And his syre a soutere, ysuled⁸ in grees,
 10 His teep wiþ toylinge of⁹ leþer tatered as a sawe!
 Alaas! þat lordes of þe londe leveþ¹⁰ swiche wrecchen,
 And lenep¹¹ swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!
 Þey schulden maken bichopes her owen breþren childre,
 Oper of some gentil blod, and¹² so it best semed,
 15 And foster none faytours,¹³ ne swiche false freres,
 To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren¹⁴!
 For her kynde were more to yclense diches
 þan ben to sopers yset first, and served wiþ silver! . . .
 For Fraunces¹⁵ founded hem nougt to faren¹⁶ on þat wise,
 20 Ne Domynik¹⁷ dued¹⁸ hem never swiche drynkers to worþe
 Ne Helye¹⁹ ne Austen²⁰ swiche liif never used,
 But in poverte of spirit spended her tyme.

¹ cobbler² brat³ become⁴ press forward⁵ bow down to the wretches⁶ bend down⁷ crouch⁸ soiled⁹ tugging at¹⁰ believe¹¹ enrich¹² if¹³ traitors, deceivers¹⁴ cumber, gorge¹⁵ St. Francis of Assisi, founder
of the Franciscan order¹⁶ do¹⁷ Dominic, foun
the Dominic¹⁸ endowed¹⁹ Elijah²⁰ St. Augustine

ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIFE AND MANNERS

SONG AGAINST THE FRIARS

The following selection (lines 1-84 of the poem) is reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (London, 1859) i. 263-5. It is from MS. Brit. Mus. Cotton Cleopatra B. 2, which Wright assigns to the year 1382.

Preste, ne monke, ne ȝlt chanoun,
 Ne no man of religioun,
 Gyfen hem so to devocioun
 As done thes holy frers.
 For summe gyven ham to chyvalry, 5
 Somme to riote and ribaudery;
 Bot ffrers gyven ham to grete study,
 And to grete prayers.
 Who so kepes thair reule al,
 Bothe in worde and dede, 10
 I am ful siker that he shal
 Have heven blis to mede.¹

Men may se by thair contynauce
 That thai are men of grete penaunce,
 And also that thair sustynauce 15
 Simple is and wayke.
 I have lyved now fourty ȝers,
 And fatter men about the neres²
 Ȝit sawe I never then are these frers,
 In contreys ther thai rayke.³ 20

¹ as reward

² kidneys; cf. Isa. 34. 6

³ wander about

Now mot ich soutere¹ his sone setten to schole,
 And ich a beggers brot² on þe booke lerne,
 And worþ to³ a writere, and wiþ a lorde dwell,
 Oper falsly to a frere, þe fend for to serven.
 5 So of þat beggers brot a bychop schal worþen,
 Among þe peres of þe lond prese⁴ to sitten,
 And lordes sones lowly to þo losells aloute⁵;
 Knyghtes croukeþ⁶ hem to, and crucheþ⁷ full lowe;
 And his syre a soutere, ysuled⁸ in grees,
 10 His teef wiþ toylinge of⁹ leþer tatered as a sawe!
 Alaas! þat lordes of þe londe leveþ¹⁰ swiche wrechen,
 And lenep¹¹ swiche lorels for her lowe wordes!
 Þey schulden maken bichopes her owen breþren childre,
 Oper of some gentil blod, and¹² so it best semed,
 15 And foster none faytours,¹³ ne swiche false freres,
 To maken fatt and full, and her fleche combren¹⁴!
 For her kynde were more to yclense diches
 þan ben to sopers yset first, and served wiþ silver! . . .
 For Fraunces¹⁵ founded hem nougt to faren¹⁶ on þat wise,
 20 Ne Domyrik¹⁷ dued¹⁸ hem never swiche drynkers to worþe,
 Ne Helye¹⁹ ne Austen²⁰ swiche liif never used,
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That thai are men of grete penaunce,
And also that thair sustynaunce 15
 Simple is and wayke.
I have lyved now fourty ȝers,
And fatter men about the neres²
Ȝit sawe I never then are these frers,
 In contreys ther thai rayke.³ 20

¹ as reward

² kidneys; cf. Isa. 34. 6

³ wander about

Meteles,¹ so megre are thai made,
 And penaunce so puttes ham down,
 That ichone is an hors-lade,²
 When he shal trusse of toun.³

5 Allas, that ever it shuld be so,
 Suche clerkes as thai about shuld go,
 Fro toun to toun by two and two,
 To seke thair sustynauce!
 By God that al this world wan,
 10 He that that ordre first bygan
 Me thynk certes it was a man
 Of simple ordynaunce.⁴
 For thai have noght to lyve by,
 Thai wandren here and there,
 15 And dele with dyvers marcerye,⁵
 Right as thai pedlers were.

Thai dele with purses, pynnes, and knyves,
 With gyrdles, gloves, for wenchis and wyves;
 Bot ever backward the husband thryves
 20 Ther thai are haunted till.⁶
 For when the gode man is fro hame,
 And the frere comes to oure dame,
 He spares nauther for synne ne shame
 That he ne dos his wille.
 25 Ȝif thai no helpe of houswyves had,
 When husbandes are not inne,
 The freres welfare were ful bad,
 For thai shuld brewe ful thynne.

30 Somme frers beren pelure⁷ aboute,
 For grete ladys and wenchis stoute,

¹ without meat² horse load³ pack out of town⁴ regulation, rule of life⁵ mercery (textile goods and small wares)⁶ where they are accustomed to go⁷ fur

'To reverence¹ with thair clothes withoute,
 Al after that thair cre² —
 For somme vaire,³ and somme gryse,⁴
 For somme bugee,⁵ and for somme byse⁶;
 And also many a dyvers spyse,
 In bagges about thair bere.
 Al that for women is plesand
 Ful redy certes have thair;
 Bot lytel gyfe thair the husband,
 That for al shal pay.

'Trantes⁷ thair can,⁸ and many a jape⁹;
 For somme can with a pound of sape¹⁰
 Gete him a kyrtelle¹¹ and a cape,
 And somewhat els therto.
 Wherto shuld I othes swere?
 Ther is no pedler that pak can bere
 That half so dere can selle his gere
 As¹² a frer can do.
 For if he gife a wyfe a knyfe
 That cost bot penys two,
 Worthe ten knyves, so mot I thryfe,
 He wyl have er he go.

Iche man that here shal lede his life,
 That has a faire doghter or a wyfe,
 Be war that no frer ham shryfe,
 Nauther loude ne stille.
 Thof women seme of hert ful stable,
 With faire byhest and with fable
 Thai can make thair hertes chaungeable,
 And thair likynges fulfille.

¹ to turn back, so as to show
the lining

² plow (?)

³ fur made from the skin of a
kind of squirrel

⁴ gray fur

⁵ lambskin fur

⁶ a (brown?) fur used for trimming

⁷ tricks

⁸ know

⁹ jest

¹⁰ soap

¹¹ mantle

¹² MS. then

Be war¹ ay with the lynnitour,²
 And with his felawe bathe,
 And³ thai make maystries⁴ in thi bour,
 It shal turne the to scathe.⁵

ON THE MINORITE FRIARS

This poem, found in the same manuscript as the preceding one, is also reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (i. 268-70). The writer seems to be describing pictorial representations.

5 Of thes frer mynours me thenkes moch wonder,
 That waxen are thus hauteyn,⁶ that som tyme weren under;
 Among men of holy chirch thai maken mochel blonder⁷;
 Nou he that sytes⁸ us above make ham sone to sonder⁹!
 With an O and an I, thai praysen not Seynt Poule;
 10 Thai lyen on Seyn[t] Fraunceys, by my fader soule.

First thai gabben on¹⁰ God, that alle men may se,
 When thai hangen him on hegh on a grene tre,
 With leves and with blossemes that bright are of ble,¹¹
 That was never Goddes Son, by my leute.¹²
 15 With an O and an I, men wenen that thai wede,¹³
 To carpe so of clergy that¹⁴ can not thair Crede.

Thai have done him on a croys fer up in the skye,
 And festned on hym wyenges, as he shuld fle;
 This fals feyned byleve¹⁵ shal thai soure bye,¹⁶
 20 On that lovelych Lord so for to lye.
 With an O and an I, one sayd ful stille:
 'Armachan¹⁷ distroy ham, if it is Goddes wille!'

¹ cautious² friar licensed to beg within certain limits; cf. Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Tale* 9-25³ if⁴ play tricks⁵ to your harm⁶ haughty⁷ confusion⁸ sits⁹ disperse them soon¹⁰ make sport of¹¹ hue¹² loyalty, faith¹³ go mad¹⁴ MS. thai¹⁵ belief¹⁶ Cf. 112 23¹⁷ Richard Fitzr.
(d. 1360)

Ther comes one out of the skye in a grey gown,
 As it were an hoghyerd¹ hyand² to toun;
 Thai have mo³ goddes then we, I say by Mahoun,⁴
 Alle men under ham that ever beres crown.⁵

With an O and an I, why shuld thai not be shent⁶?

Ther wantes noght bot a fyre that thai nere alle brent.⁷

Went I forther on my way in that same tyde⁸;
 Ther I sawe a frere blede in myddes of his syde;
 Bothe in hondes and in fete had he woundes wyde.
 To serve to that same frer the pope mot abyde.⁹

With an O and an I, I wonder of thes dedes,
 To se a pope holde a dische whyl the frer bleds.

A cart was made al of fyre, as it shuld be;
 A gray frer I sawe therinne, that best lyked me.
 Wele I wote thai shal be brent, by my leaute;
 God graunt me that grace that I may it se.

With an O and an I, brent be thai alle,
 And alle that helpes therto faire mot byfalle¹⁰!

Thai preche alle of povert, bot that love thai noght;
 For gode mete to thair mouthe the toun is thurgh soght.¹¹
 Wyde are thair wonnynges,¹² and wonderfully wrought;
 Murdre and horedome¹³ ful dere has it boght.

With an O and an I, for sixe pens er thai fayle,
 Sle thi fadre, and jape¹⁴ thi modre, and thai wyl the assoile.

¹ swineherd
² hastening
³ more
⁴ Mahomet
⁵ tonsure

⁶ destroyed
⁷ burned
⁸ time
⁹ must wait
¹⁰ may fair (good) befall

¹¹ searched through
¹² dwellings
¹³ whoredom
¹⁴ lie with

THE REPLY OF FRIAR DAW TOPIAS

About 1401. This selection, from MS. Oxford Digby 41, is here reprinted from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2. 76-8.

Forthermore¹ thou spekest
Of oure costli houses;
Thou seist it were more almes
To helpen the nedy
Than to make siche housynge
To men that ben deede,
To whiche longith² but graves
And mornynge-housis.

Jak, is not a man beter
Than a rude best?
Ȝit makist thou to thi sheep a shepen,³
And to thi hors a stable;
And many a pore man ther is
That hath noon hillyng,⁴
But oonly heven is his hous.
The bestes stond kevered;
Whi houses thou not pore men
As wele as thi beestis?
Take hede to sumwhat
That is sêid biforen:
And⁵ thou answe're to my question,
Answer to thin owne.

Thou carpist⁶ also of oure coveitise,
And sparist the sothe;
Thou seist we ben more ryal⁷
Than ony lordis.
Coventis have wee noon, Jack,
But cloistrers we ben callid,
Foundid¹ afor⁸ with charite,

¹ MS. ff-² belong, are fitting³ sheep-cote⁴ shelter⁵ if⁶ talkest⁷ royal, regal⁸ aforetime

Or that he were flemyd¹;
 But sith² entride envie,
 And revyd³ hath oure houses,
 That unnethes⁴ the hillinge⁵
 Hangith on the sparres⁶;
 And git thou thinkist hem over-good —
 Yvel fare thou therfore!
 Jak, where saw thou ever frere-houses
 Thourgout the rewme⁷
 Liche in ony rialte⁸
 To the Toure of Londoun,
 To Wyndesore, to Wodestoke,
 To Wallingforde, to Shene,
 To Herforde, to Eltham,
 To Westmynster, to Dover⁹?
 How maist thou for rebukyng
 Lye so lowde,
 To saye that oure covetise
 Passith the lordes'?

5

19

15

THE LAND OF COKAYGNE

The Land of Cokaygne, which has been called the earliest extant English fabliau, is not a fabliau at all, but rather a piece of Rabelaisian satire. With the satire, which is directed against monks and nuns, and possibly includes some local and specific references, are, however, mingled touches of the purely comic spirit. Cf. Pherecrates, in Athenæus 6. 97.

An Old French poem similar in character is found in Barbazan and Méon's *Fabliaux et Contes* 4. 175–81, entitled *Li Fabliaus de Coquaigne* (though, again, not a fabliau). Here the details are somewhat different, and the satiric intent, and reference to the religious orders, much less marked, but the general picture is of the same sort. One of the most amusing details is similar:

Par les rues vont rostissant
 Les crasses oes, et tornant
 Tout par eles [lines 37–9].

¹ before it was banished

² afterward

³ robbed; MS. renyd

⁴ so that scarcely

⁵ roof

⁶ rafters, beams

⁷ realm

⁸ royalty

⁹ Royal castles or palaces were
in all these places

Here there are two rivers of wine, of which he who will may drink; four Easters, Christmases, and All-Saints Days every year: but a Lent only once in twenty years!

Our text is reproduced (120 lines out of 195) from Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1. 148 ff.), which follows MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 913. It has been dated ca. 1305.

- Fur¹ in see bi west Spaygne²
 Is a lond ihote³ Cokaygne.
 þer nis lond under hevenliche⁴
 Of wel,⁵ of godnis, hit iliche;
 5 þoʒ Paradis be miri and briȝt,
 Cokaygn is of fairir siȝt.
 What is þer in Paradis
 Bot grasse, and flure, and grene ris⁶?
 þoʒ þer be joi and grete dute,⁷
 10 þer nis mete⁸ bote frute;
 þer nis halle, bure,⁹ no benche,
 Bot watir, manis þurst to quenche.
 Beþ þer no man but two —
 Hely¹⁰ and Enok¹¹ also;
 15 Elinglich¹² may hi go
 Whar þer woniþ¹³ men no mo.
 In Cokaygne is met and drink
 Wiþute care, how,¹⁴ and swink.¹⁵
 þe met is trie,¹⁶ þe drink is clere,
 20 To none, russin,¹⁷ and sopper.
 I sigge¹⁸ forsop, boutē were,¹⁹
 þer nis lond on erthe is pere²⁰;
 Under heven nis lond, iwisse,²¹
 Of so mochil joi and blisse.
 25 þer is mani swete siȝte:
 Al is dai, nis þer no nigte;

¹ far² MS. Spayngne³ called⁴ heaven's domain⁵ prosperity⁶ branches⁷ delight⁸ is no food⁹ chamber¹⁰ Elijah; cf. 2 Kings 2, 11¹¹ Enoch; cf. Gen. 5. 24¹² sorrowfully¹³ dwell¹⁴ trouble¹⁵ labor¹⁶ select¹⁷ (?)¹⁸ say¹⁹ without doubt²⁰ its equal²¹ indeed

þer nis baret¹ noþer strif;
 Nis þer no deþ, ac² ever lif;
 þer nis lac of met. no cloþ;
 þer nis man no womman wroþ;
 þer nis serpent, wolf, no fox, 5
 Hors no capil,³ kowe no ox;
 þer nis schepe, no swine, no gote,
 Ne non horwꝯ,⁴ la,⁵ God it wot,
 Nother harace,⁶ nother stode⁷;
 þe londe is ful of oþer gode. 10
 Nis þer flei,⁸ fle,⁹ no lowse,
 In cloþ, in toune, bed, no house;
 þer nis dunnir,¹⁰ slete, no haile,¹¹
 No non vile worme, no snaile,¹²
 No non storme, rein, no winde; 15
 þer is man no womman blinde;
 Ok¹³ al is game,¹⁴ joi, and gle.
 Wel is him þat þer mai be!
 þer beþ rivers gret and fine,
 Of oile, melk, honi, and wine; 20
 Watir serviþ þer to noþing
 Bot to sigt and to waiissing.¹⁶
 þer is [mani]¹⁶ maner frute;
 Al is solas and dedute.¹⁷
 þer is a wel fair abbei 25
 Of white monkes and of grei:
 þer beþ bowris and halles;
 Al of pasteis¹⁸ beþ þe walles,
 Of fleis, of fisse, and rich met,
 þe likfullist¹⁹ þat man mai et, 30
 Fluren²⁰ cakes beþ þe scingles²¹ alle

1 quarrel
 2 but
 3 nag
 4 defilement
 5 truly
 6 place for breeding horses
 7 stud

8 fly
 9 flea
 10 thunder
 11 hail; MS. hawle
 12 MS. snawile
 13 but
 14 mirth

15 washing
 16 em. M.
 17 delight
 18 pasties, pies
 19 most delicious
 20 flour
 21 shingles

Of cherche, cloister, boure, and halle;
 þe pinnes¹ beþ fat podinges —
 Rich met to princez and [to] kinges;
 Man mai þerof et inoȝ

Al wiþ riȝt, and noȝt wiþ woȝ²:
 Al is commune to zung and old,
 To stoute and sterne, mek and bold.

þer is a cloister, fair and liȝt,
 Brod and lang, of sembli³ siȝt.

þe pilers of þat cloistre alle
 Beþ iturned of cristale,
 With har bas⁴ and capitale
 Of grene jasje and rede corale.

In þe praer⁵ is a tre,
 Swiþe likful⁶ for to se:
 þe rote is gingevir and galingale⁷;
 þe siouns⁸ beþ al sedwale⁹;
 Trie maces beþ þe flure;
 þe rind, canel¹⁰ of swet odor;
 þe frute, gilofre¹¹ of gode smakke¹²;
 Of cucubes¹³ þer nis no lakke.

þer beþ rosis of rede ble,¹⁴
 And lilie likful for to se —
 þai faloweþ¹⁵ never day no niȝt;
 þis aȝt be¹⁶ a swete siȝt.

þer beþ iiii willis¹⁷ in þe abbei
 Of triacle¹⁸ and halwei,¹⁹
 Of baum²⁰ and ek piement,²¹
 Ever ernend²² to riȝt rent²³;

Of þam²⁴ stremis al þe molde.²⁵

¹ pinnacles

² wrong

³ seemly

⁴ their base

⁵ meadow

⁶ very attractive

⁷ ginger and galingale (sweet
cyperus)

⁸ scions, shoots

⁹ zedoary

¹⁰ cinnamon

¹¹ gillyflower

¹² taste

¹³ cubebs (a pungent spice)

¹⁴ hue

¹⁵ fade

¹⁶ ought to be

¹⁷ wells

¹⁸ treacle (a medicine)

¹⁹ healing water

²⁰ balm

²¹ spiced wine sweetened
with honey

²² running

²³ profit

²⁴ these; MS. þai

²⁵ earth, room

Stonis precieuse, and golde :

þer is saphir and uniune,¹

Carbuncle and astiune,²

Smaragde,³ lugre,⁴ and prassiune,⁵

Beril, onix, topasiune,⁶

Ametist and crisolite,

Calcedun and epetite.⁷

þer beþ briddes mani and fale⁸ —

þrostil, þruisse,⁹ and niztingale,

Chalandre¹⁰ and wodwale,¹¹

And oper briddes wipout tale,¹²

þat stinteþ¹³ never by har migt¹⁴

Miri to sing dai and nigt.

Ȝite I do ȝow mo to witte¹⁵ :

þe gees irostid on þe spitte

Fleez¹⁶ to þat abbai, God hit wot,

And gredip¹⁷ : 'Gees al hote, al hot !'

Hi bringeþ garlek gret plente,

þe best idigt¹⁸ þat man mai se.

þe leverokes¹⁹ — þat beþ cup²⁰ —

Ligtip adun to manis muþ,

Idigt in stu²¹ ful swiþe wel,

Pudrid²² wiþ gilofre and canel.

Nis no spech of no drink ;

Ak take inoȝ wiþute swink.

Whan þe monkes ȝooþ²³ to masse,

All þe fenestres²⁴ þat beþ of glasse

Turneþ into cristal brigȝ,

To ȝive [þe] monkes more ligt.

When þe masses beþ iseiid,

5

10

15

20

25

30

¹ pearl

² astrion (*perhaps* asteriated sapphire)

³ emerald

⁴ ligure

⁵ chrysoprase

⁶ topaz

⁷ hepatitis

⁸ numerous

⁹ thrush

¹⁰ a Mediterranean species of lark ; see *Romance of the Rose* (81, 663), 914

¹¹ woodpecker

¹² number

¹³ cease

¹⁴ according to their ability

¹⁵ give you to know further

¹⁶ fly ; MS. fleeȝ

¹⁷ cry out

¹⁸ dressed

¹⁹ larks

²⁰ well known

²¹ made into a stew

²² sprinkled

²³ MS. ȝeeþ

²⁴ windows

And þe bokes up ileiid,¹
 Þe cristal turnip into glasse —
 In state þat hit rapier² wasse.

THE GOSSIPS' FEAST

The following poem is reprinted from Dyboski's *Songs, Carols, etc.* (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 101), an edition of Richard Hill's *Commonplace-Book* (MS. Oxford Balliol 354). The manuscript contains records as late as 1536, but our text differs only slightly from that of Wright in *Percy Society* 23. 91-5, which is dated by the editor 1461-85, and from which two or three readings are here adopted (marked W.). Our text is on pages 106-8 of Dyboski.

5 *Hoow, gossip myne, gossip myn,
 Whan will we go to þe wyne,
 Good gossip[is myn]?*

I shall you tell a full good sport,
 How gossippis gader them on a sort,³
 Ther seke⁴ bodyes to comforte,
 10 Whan they mete
 In lane or stret,
 God⁵ gossipis myn, [a!]

But I dare not, for þer dissplesans,⁶
 Tell of þes maters half the substance;
 15 But get sumwhat of þer governance,⁷
 As ferre as I dare,
 I will declare,
 Good gossipis myn, [a!]

20 'Good gossip myn, wher have ye be?
 Hit is so long sith I you see;
 Wher is þe best wyne, tell you me!
 Can ye owght tell?'
 'Ye, full well,
 Good gossippis myn, [a!]

¹ laid² formerly³ in a company⁴ sick⁵ good⁶ lest I displease them⁷ proceedings

I know a drawght of mery-go-down,¹

The beste it is in all this town,

But yet I wolde not, for my gown,

My husbond wyste.'

'Ye may me triste,²

Good gossippis myn, [a!']

5

'Call forth owr gossippis by and by,

Elynore, Johan, and Margery,

Margret, Alis, and Cecely,

For pei will cum,

10

Both all and som,

Good gossippis myn, a!

And eche of them will sumwhat bryng,

Gose, or pigge, or capons wyng,

Pastes³ of pygynnes, or sum oper thyng;

15

For we muste ete

Sum maner mett,

Good gossippis myn, a!

Go beffore by tweyn and tweyn,

Wisely, pat ye be not seen,

20

For I muste home and cum agayn,

To witt, ywis,

Wher my husbond is,

Good gossippis myn, a!

A strype or two God myght send me,

25

Yf my husbond myght here see me.'

'She pat is aferde, lett her flee,'

Quod Alis than;

'I dred no man,

Good gossippis myn, a!'

30

¹ strong ale

² trust

³ pasties, pies

' Now be we in þe tavern sett,
 A drawght of þe best lett hym fett,
 To bryng owr husbondis owt of dett,
 For we will spend
 Till God more send,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

Eche of them browght forth þer disshe ;
 Sum browght flesshe, and sum [browght] fisse.
 Quod Margret meke now, with a wisshe :
 ' I wold Anne were here,
 She wold mak us chere,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

' How say ye, gossippis ? Is þis wyn good ?'
 ' þat is it,' quod Elynore, ' by þe rode !
 It chereth þe hart and comforteth þe blod.
 Such jonkets¹ amonge
 Shall make us leve² long.
 Good gossippis [myn, a] !'

Anne bade me fill a pot of Muscadell,
 ' For of all wyne I love it well ;
 Swet wyne kepe my body in hele³ ;
 Yf I had it nowght,
 I shuld tak thowght,
 Good gossippis myn, a !'

' How loke ye, gossip, at þe bordis end ?
 Not mery, gossip ? God it amend !
 All shall be well, els God defend ;
 Be mery and glad,
 And sit not so sade,
 Good gossip myn, a !'

¹ delicacies (drinks) ; MS. jonkers ; W. jonchettes

² live

³ health, well-being

'Wold God I had don after your counsell,
 For my husbond is so fell¹
 He betith me lyke þe devill of hell;
 And þe more I crye,
 Þe lesse mercy,
 Good gossippis myn, a l'

5

Alis with a lowde voys spak than:
 'Ywis,²' she said, 'litill good he can,
 þat betith or striketh any woman,
 And specially his wyff;
 God geve hym short lyff,
 Good gossippis myn, a l'

10

Margret meke said: 'So mot I thryve,
 I know no man þat is alyve
 þat gevith me ii strokis, but he [shall]³ have v;
 I am not afferd,
 Thowgh he have a berde,
 Good gossippis myn, a l'

15

On⁴ cast down her shot,⁵ and went away.
 'Gossip,' quod Elynore, 'what dide she pay?'
 'Not but a peny; loo, þerfor I say,
 She shall no more
 Be of ovr lore,⁶
 Good gossippis myn, a l'

20

Suche gestis⁷ we may have ynow,
 þat will not for þer shot alowe.⁸
 With whom com she, gossip?' 'With you l'
 'Nay,' quod Johan,
 'I com aloon,
 Good gossippis myn, a l'

25

30

¹ cruel
² W; MS. eviss
³ W.

⁴ one
⁵ contribution, share
⁶ school, sort

⁷ guests
⁸ provide

'Now rekyn ovr shot, and go we hens;
What cummeth to eche of us?' 'But iii pens.¹'

'Parde, þis is but a small expens

For suche a sorte,

And all but sporte,

Good gossippis myn, a l'

'Torn down þe stret, whan ye cum owt,

And we will cumpas rownd abowt.'

'Gossip,' quod Anne, 'what nedith þat dowt?'²

Your husbond is pleased,

Whan ye be eased,

Good gossippis myn, a l'

Whatsoever any man thynk,

We com for nowght but for good drynk;

Now let us go home and wynke,

For it may be seen

Wher we have ben,

Good gossippis myn, a l'

This is þe thougt þat gossippis take:

Ons in þe wek, mery will they make,

And all small drynkis þei will forsake;

But wyne of þe best

Shall have no rest,

Good gossippis myn, a l'

Sum be at þe tavern prise³ in þe weke,

And so be sum every day eke,

Or ellis þei will gron and mak them sek,

For thyngis used

Will not be refused⁴;

Good gossippis myn, a l'

¹ MS. d.

² fear

³ MS. III^{re}

⁴ for things one is accustomed to cannot be done with

STANS PUER AD MENSAM

The following poem, by John Lydgate (1370?-1451?), the follower and imitator of Chaucer, is taken from the print of MS. Harl. 2251 (about 1460) in *The Babees Book*, ed. Furnivall (E.E.T.S. 32). With its precepts one may compare Chaucer's characterization of the Prioress (*Prolog.* 127-36):

At mete wel ytaught was she withalle;
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
 That no drope ne fille upon hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.

Our extract comprises lines 15-42, 57-70. Two or three emendations are from the Lambeth MS.

Who spekithe to the in any maner place,
 Rudely cast nat thyn ye¹ adowne,
 But with a sadde chiere² loke hym in the face.
 Walke demurely by strete in the towne;
 Advertise the withe³ wisdom and reasoun.
 Withe dissolute laughthers do thow non offence
 Tofore⁴ thy soverayn,⁵ whiles he is in presence.

Pare clene thy nailes, thyn handes wasshe also
 Tofore mete, and whan thow dooest arise;
 Sitte in that place thow art assigned to;
 Prease⁶ nat to⁷ hye in no maner wise;
 And til thow se afore the thy service,⁸
 Be nat to hasty on brede for to byte,
 Of gredynesse lest men wolde the edwyte.⁹

Grennyng and mowes¹⁰ at the table eschewe¹¹;
 Cry nat to loude; kepe honestly¹² silence;

¹ eye² sober expression³ turn your attention to⁴ before⁵ master⁶ press⁷ too⁸ plate of food⁹ reproach, twit; MS. end-¹⁰ grinning and grimaces¹¹ MS. eschowe¹² politely

To enboce¹ thy jowis² withe mete [it] is nat diewe³;
 With ful mowthe speke nat, lest thou do offence;
 Drynk nat bretheles for hast ne negligence;
 Kepe clene thy lippes from fat of flesshe or fysshe;
 Wype clene thi spone, leve it nat in thy disshe.

Of brede ibyten no soppis⁴ that thou make;
 In ale nor wyne withe hande leve no fattenes;
 With mowthe enbrewed⁵ thi cuppe thou nat take;
 Defoule⁶ no napery⁷ for no rekelesnes;
 [Loude]⁸ for to souppe is agenst gentiles.
 [N]evyr at mete begynne thou nat stryf⁹;
 Thi teth also thou pike nat with no knyf. . . .

Droppe nat thi brest withe sawce ne with potage;
 Brynge no knyves unskoured to the table;
 Fil nat thy spone, lest in the cariage
 It went beside,¹⁰ whiche were nat comendable.
 Be quyke and redy, meke and servisable,
 Wele awaityng to fulfyll anone
 What that thy soverayne comau[n]dithe to¹¹ be done.

And wharesoever that thou dyne or soupe,
 Of gentillesse take salt withe thy knyf;
 And be wele ware thou blowe nat in the cuppe.
 Reverence thy felawe, gynne¹² withe hym no stryf;
 Be¹³ thy powere, kepe pees all thy lyf.
 Interrupt nat, whereso [that]¹⁴ thou wende,
 None other mans tale, til he have made an ende.

¹ stuff out² jaws³ fitting⁴ sops⁵ soiled⁶ defile; MS. enbrewe (em.
from Lambeth MS.)⁷ table-linen⁸ em. from Lamb.⁹ MS. stryfe¹⁰ should spill over¹¹ MS. the to (em. from Lamb.)¹² begin¹³ according to¹⁴ em. from Lamb.

CHARM FOR THE TOOTHACHE

From MS. Linc. Cath. Thornton A. 1. 17, printed in Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 1: 375.

*Say þe charme thris to¹ it be sayd ix tymes, and ay
thris at a charemynge.²*

I conjoure the, laythely³ beste, with⁴ þat ilke spere
þat Longyous⁵ in his hande gane bere,
And also with ane hatte of thorne 5
þat one my Lordis hede was borne,
With alle þe wordis, mare and lesse,
With þe office of þe messe,
With my Lorde and his xii postills,⁶
With oure Lady and hir x maydenys, 10
Saynt Margrete, þe haly quene,
Saynt Katerin, þe haly virgyne —
Ix tymes Goddis forbott,⁷ þou wikkyde worme,
þat ever þou make any rystynge,⁸
Bot awaye mote þou wende 15
To þe erde⁹ and þe stane.¹⁰

PREFACE TO A TREATISE ON MEDICINE

From the Payne manuscript, of the first half of the fifteenth century, printed in Furnivall's *Political, Religious, and Love Poems* (E.E.T.S. 15). Readings supplied from Sloane MS. 1314 are marked S.

The man þat wol of lechecraft¹¹ lere,
Red ovyr this book, and he may here
Many medycinis both good and trewe,
To hele sores both oolde and newe, 20
And precieuse medycinis, þorw Goddis grace

¹ till
² charming
³ loathsome
⁴ by

⁵ Longus, or Longinus, the Roman soldier
who pierced the side of Christ
⁶ apostles
⁷ God forbid

⁸ delay (resting)
⁹ earth
¹⁰ stone
¹¹ medicine

To save mens¹ lyves in diverse place.
 Cryst, þat made bothe Est and West,
 Geve grace her sowles have² god rest,
 Evere more in hevene for to be,
 In hevene wyt þe Trinite!

Herinne be medycinis, wythoutyn fable,
 To hele alle sores þat ben curable,
 Of swerd, of knyf, and of arwe³ —
 Be þe wounde wyde or narwe —
 Of sper,⁴ of quarel,⁵ of dagger, of dart,
 To make him hool in ilka⁶ part,
 So þe seek⁷ wol do wysely,
 And kepe himself fro surfety.
 Be þe wounde nevere so deep,
 Þerof thar⁸ him take no kep,
 So þat he drynke save⁹ or anteoche,¹⁰
 Him thar⁸ not drede of þat outrage:
 Be¹¹ þat on and twenti days be goon,
 He schal be hol, both flesch and bon,
 To ride and go in ilka¹² place,
 Thorw þe verteu of Goddys grace.
 Thus seyth Ypocras,¹³ þe good surgien,
 And Socrates and Galyen,¹⁴
 Þat weren philisophres alle thre,
 Þat tyme þe best in any countree:
 In þis werld¹⁵ were non her¹⁶ pere,
 As fer as any man coude here.

¹ MS. men² may have³ arrow⁴ spear⁵ a short, square-headed arrow⁶ every; MS. ylke, S. ilka⁷ if the sick man⁸ he need; MS. dar, S. thar⁹ sage¹⁰ a medicinal potion of herbsboiled in white wine and
honey¹¹ by the time¹² MS. ylka, S. ilka¹³ Hippocrates¹⁴ Galen¹⁵ MS. weld¹⁶ their

A MEDIAEVAL WILL

This will (from MS. Oxford Univ. Coll. 97), which the testator dates in the year 1399, is here reprinted from Horstman's edition of Richard Rolle, 2. 448-9.

In þe name of Almyghty Jesu, I, Robart F[olkyngham], beynge in hool and cleere mynde, þe vi day of Juylle,¹ þe geere of our Lorde a thousand þre hundreth foure score and nynetene, make my testament and my laste wylle in þis manere. First, I bytake² my soule into þe hondes of Almygty God, bysechyng to oure lady, Seynte Marye, and to alle þe hoole compaygnye of heven, to preye for mercy and grace for me. Also I byqwethe my wrecchyd synfulle body to been heere in erthe, abydyng þe dredful doom of God, in suche place and manere as yt lyketh to his wyse endeles purveaunce.³ Also I wylle þat at myn enterement þere be abowte my body bot twey⁴ tapres of wex, and foure torches of wex, þe whiche torches I wille be geven to brenne atte þe levacioun⁵ of þe sacrement whil þei wil dure,⁶ in þe same chirche þat I schalle be beryed inne. Also I wille þat, in alle þe haste þat yt may be doo after my deth, þere be sayde a thousande massez for my soule, and for alle Cristen soules. Also I bequethe, to be doon in almesse after⁷ dyscrecioun of myn executours, in alle þe hast for my soule, for þe soules of my fadre, modre, and of alle hem þat I am endebtede to by way of kynde,⁸ by way of ffrendshipe, or by way of iestitucioun, for þe gode I have hade of heres⁹ by any way, fourty pounde of golde, and, over þat, þat þei have part of alle þe preyours, goode dedes, and almesse þat I have do or ordeyned to be doo, as wel in þis testament as tofore¹⁰ in alle my lyf. Sythene,¹¹ I geve to William Flete, my cosyn, fourty marke of golde and alle myn horses, a flew bed of Arras werke, twey payre schetes, my best haberjoun,¹² my pyan,¹³ my ketylle-hat,¹⁴ and myn armyngge sworde of Burdeux. Also I bqueth to Johan of Brugge an haberjoun, a basynet,¹⁵ a longe dagger of Burdeux harneyside¹⁶ with sylver in manere of a sword.

¹ July² commit³ providence⁴ two⁵ lifting up⁶ last⁷ at the⁸ kindred⁹ theirs, them¹⁰ before¹¹ next¹² habergeon, coat of mail¹³ pisane (armor to protect chest and neck)¹⁴ kind of helmet¹⁵ basinet (steel headpiece)¹⁶ mounted

Also, I geve to Thomas Salman an haberjoun and a basynet.

Also, I byqueth to William Flete, my cosyn, alle þe remanant of myne armeure.

Also, I byqweth to Sir William Countour a longe sangwyn¹ gowne
5 furred with Calabir.²

Also, I byqueth to Thomas Heighelme a gowne of blak worstede, furred with bevere.

Also, I wylle þat alle þe debtez þat any man cane resonably axe, þat þei been payed. And þe remanant of alle my goode, whereso
10 it be in þe handes of my debtours or elles,³ I beqweth it to Jonet, my wyfe, to governe and susteyne with, hir and Elianore, my doughtre, ande eke to doon in almesse for me, and for here, and for alle hem þat we been endebted to doon for by any way, as sche may resonably, nouȝt amenysynge⁴ gretely here lyfode ne here poure
15 stat. The execucioun of whiche thynges abovesayd after my laste wille to be doon and fulfillide, I make myn executours Jonet my wyfe, William Wenloke, Squiere, Sire William Countour, Prestre, Thomas Heighelme, Thomas Salman, William Flete, my cosyn; preyinge to hem for Goddes sake, for charitable dede of almesse,
20 and for þe sovereyn trust I have in hem, þat þei wille take þis charge on hem, and refuse it by no maner way. Writen þe day and zere tofore nempned,⁵ with myn owen honde, in wisesse of my laste wille, and ensealede with my seal.

THE LIBEL OF ENGLISH POLICY

The Libel (or Little Book) of English Policy, a plea for a strong navy, was written, according to internal evidence, after the siege of Calais by the Duke of Burgundy, in 1436, and before the death of the Emperor Sigismund in 1437. The siege of Calais, though unsuccessful, had roused England to a sense of the importance of controlling the straits; and the author of this poem, who is unknown, cleverly shows how all the commerce of Europe (generally directed toward the Low Countries) must needs pass through 'the narrow sea.' Control of the sea, therefore, would make England powerful. He reviews the exports and imports of the chief countries of Europe, showing intimate

¹ blood-red

² a kind of squirrel fur

³ elsewhere

⁴ named

acquaintance with the commercial life of his age. He may in some respects be compared with Chaucer's merchant, who

wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle ;

and his line

Kepe thou the see, that is the walle of England,

recalls Shakespeare (*Rich. II* 2. I. 48-50, 63) :

This precious stone, set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house. . . .
England bound in with the triumphant sea.

His spirit, we are told (*Traill, Social England* 2. 347 ; cf. 340, 344 ff., 406) 'is exactly the spirit which animated the sea-captains and merchant adventurers of the golden age of Elizabeth.'

Our selections are from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* 2. 157-9, 160-1, 172-3, this text being printed from MS. Oxford Bodl. Laud. 704. Other editions are by Hertzberg (1878) and in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, Glasgow, 1903, 2. 114-47. Emendations in the following pages are from the two other editions noted ; *ff* has been changed to *f*.

The trewe processe of Englysh polycye —
Of utterwarde¹ to kepe thys regne² in rest
Of oure England, that no man may denye,
Nere³ say of soth but it is one the best —
Is thys, that who seith⁴ Southe, Northe, Est, and West, 5
Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe th' amyralte,⁵
That we bee maysteres of the narowe see.⁶

For Sigesmonde, the grete emperoure
Whyche yet regneth, whan⁷ he was in this londe
Wyth Kynge Herry the Fifte,⁸ prince of honoure, 10
Here moche glorye, as hym thought, he fonde⁹ ;
A myghty londe, whyche hadde take on honde
To werre¹⁰ in Fraunce and make mortalite,
And evere welle kepe¹¹ rounde aboute the see.

¹ from (foes) without
² kingdom
³ nor
⁴ professes to be of (?)

⁵ the admiralty
⁶ the Straits of Dover
⁷ In 1416
⁸ MS. V¹⁰

⁹ MS. founde
¹⁰ war
¹¹ MS. kept

And to the kynge thus he seyde: 'My brothere' —
 Whan he perceyved too townes, Calys¹ and Dover —
 'Of alle youre townes to chese of one and othere,
 To kepe the see, and sone to come overe
 5 To werre oughtwardes,² and youre regne to recover,
 Kepe these too townes, sire, to³ youre mageste
 As youre tweyne eyne,⁴ to kepe the narowe see.'

For if this see be kepte in tyme of werre,
 Who cane here passe without thought daungere and woo?
 10 Who may eschape, who may myschef dyfferre⁵?
 What marchaundye⁶ may forby be agoo⁷?
 For nedes hem muste take truse⁸ every foo —
 Flaundres, and Spayne, and othere, trust to me —
 Or ellis hyndered alle for thys narowe see.

15 Therefore I caste me, by a lytele wrytinge,
 To shewe att eye⁹ thys conclusion, e,
 For concyens, and for myne acquytyng
 Ayenst God, and ageyne abusyon
 And cowardyse, and to oure enmyes confusion;
 20 For iiiii thynges our noble¹⁰ sheueth to me —
 Kyng, shype, and swerde, and pouer of the see.

Where bene oure shippes, where bene oure swerdes, become¹¹?
 Owre enmyes bid for the shippe sette a shepe.
 Allas! oure reule halteth, hit is benome¹²;
 25 Who dare weel say that lordeshyppe shulde take kepe¹³?
 I wolle asaye, thoughe myne herte gynne to wepe,
 To do thys werke, yf we wole ever the,¹⁴
 For verry shame, to kepe aboute the see.¹⁵

¹ Calais² outwards, in foreign lands³ MS. and⁴ eyes⁵ postpone⁶ merchandise⁷ be carried past⁸ make terms (with Eng-
land)⁹ to the eye¹⁰ the gold coin called the
noble¹¹ what has become of¹² taken away¹³ heed¹⁴ prosper¹⁵ guard the circuit of the
Channel

Shalle any prynce, what so be hys name,
 Wheche hathe nobles moche lyche oures,
 Be lorde of see, and Flemmyngis to oure blame.
 Stoppe us, take us, and so make fade the floures
 Of Englysshe state, and disteyne¹ oure honnoures ?
 For cowardyse, alas ! hit shulde so be ;
 Therfore I gynne to wryte now of the see.

Knowe welle alle men that profites in certayne,²
 Commodityes called, commynge out of Spayne,
 And marchandy,³ who so wylle wete what that is,
 Bene fygues, raysyns, wyne bastarde,⁴ and dates ;
 And lycorys, Syvyle⁵ oyle, and grayne,⁶
 Whyte Castelle⁷ sope, and wax, is not in vayne ;
 Iren, wolle, wadmole,⁸ gotefel,⁹ kydefel¹⁰ also —
 For poynt-makers¹¹ fulle nedefulle be the two —
 Saffron, quiksilver, wheche arne Spaynes marchandy,
 Is into Flaundres shyppe full craftylye,
 Unto Bruges, as to here staple¹² fayre ;
 The haven of Sluse¹³ they have¹⁴ for here repayre,¹⁵
 Wheche is cleped Swyn, thaire shyppe gydyng,
 Where many vessells¹⁶ and fayre arne abydyng.
 But these merchandes, wyth there shyppe greet,
 And suche chaffare¹⁷ as they bye and gette
 By the weyes, most nede take one honde
 By the costes to passe of oure Englonde. . . .

And whenne these seyde marchauntz discharged be
 Of marchaundy in Flaundres neere the see,
 Than they be charged agayn wyth marchaundy
 That to Flaundres longeth¹⁸ full rychelye ;

¹ sully
² certain things

³ merchandise

⁴ a sweet wine, like muscadell

⁵ Seville

⁶ kermes

⁷ Castile

⁸ a coarse, hairy, woollen cloth

⁹ goatskin

¹⁰ kidskin

¹¹ those who made leather
 lacing-strings

¹² market

¹³ Sluys

¹⁴ MS. here havene

¹⁵ for them to resort to

¹⁶ vessels ; MS. wessell

¹⁷ merchandise

¹⁸ belongs ; MS. bougeth
 (em. Hertzberg)

19. Sluse : Edward III's naval victory at Sluys in 1340 gave England the mastery of the Channel for centuries.

Fyne clothe of Ipre,¹ that named is better than ou
Cloothe of Curtryke,² fyne cloothe of alle coloures
Moche fustyane, and also linnen cloothe.

But ye Flemmyngis, yf ye be not wrothe,
The grete substaunce of youre cloothe, at the full
Ye wot ye make hit of oure³ Englissh wolle.

The Janueys⁴ comyne in sondre wyses
Into this londe, wyth dyverse marchaundysses,
In grete karrekis,⁵ arrayde wythouten lake
Wyth clothes of golde, silke, and pepir blake
They bringe wyth hem, and of wood⁶ grete plente
Woole-oyle, wood-aschen,⁷ by vessels⁸ in the see,
Coton, roche-alum,⁹ and gode golde of Jene.¹⁰
And they be charged wyth wolle ageyne, I wene,
And wollene clothe of owres, of colours alle.
And they aventure, as ofte it dothe byfalle,
Into Flaundres wyth suche thynges as they bye,
That is here¹¹ cheffe staple sykerlye¹²;

And if they wolde be oure fulle ennemyse,
They shulde not passe our strenez with merchaundyse.

The grete galees¹³ of Venees and Florence
Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,¹⁴
Alle spicerye and¹⁵ grocers ware,
Wyth swete wynes, alle manere of chaffare,
Apes, and japes,¹⁶ and marmusettes taylede,¹⁷
Nifles,¹⁸ trifles, that litelle have availed,
And thynges wyth whiche they fetely¹⁹ blere²⁰ oure eye,
Wyth thynges not enduryng that we bye —
For moche of thys chaffare that is wastable
Mighte be forborne, for²¹ dere and dyssevable.²²

¹ Ypres, in Belgium

² Courtrai, in Belgium

³ MS. youre

⁴ Genoese

⁵ caracks, galleons

⁶ woad (blue dyestuff)

⁷ wood-ashes; MS. woad-

⁸ MS. woad-halle

⁹ rock alum

¹⁰ Genoa

¹¹ their

¹² in truth

¹³ galleys

¹⁴ things that give pleasure,
articles of luxury

¹⁵ trinkets

¹⁶ marmosets with tails

¹⁷ baubles, 'notions'

¹⁸ cleverly

¹⁹ dim

²⁰ as

²¹ as
²² deceptive

THE GUILD OF ST. LEONARD

The following account of the guild of St. Leonard was returned to the 'King in Council, by order of Parliament,' in 1389. Our text of it is taken from Toulmin Smith's *English Gilds* (E.E.T.S. 40. 49-50).

In honore Sancti Leonardi confessoris. In þe worchep of God alle-myghti, and of his modir Seynt Mary, and of alle þe holy company of heven, and specially of þe holy confessour Seynt Leonard, þis gilde was begonne in Damgate in þe toun of Lenne,¹ þorow þe devocion of men and women, to fyndyn² befor on ymage in þe Chirche of Seynt Jame of Lenn, in þe worchep of God and of Seynt Leonard, on 5 candelle of i li.³ waxe, to brenne every⁴ festivale day in þe gere, aforn þe ymage of Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of alle þe bretheryn, þat everiche brothir and sistir shal offren at þe chirche of Seynt Jame, on þe Soneday nexte aftir þe fest of Seynt 10 Leonard,⁵ ob.,⁶ in þe worchep of God and Seynt Leonard. Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, to have foure morspeches⁷ in þe gere. Þe firste shal bene þe Moneday neste aftir þe forseide Soneday. And at þat mornspeche, þorow on assent of alle þe brethen, to chesen⁸ an aldirman, wise and able to reule þe company to þe 15 worchep of God; and also foure men for to reseyven and kepyn þe katel⁹ of þe gilde; and also on certayne oficere to warnyn alle þe brethren to comyn to chirche; and also on clerke, to wryten þe katel of þe gilde. Þe secunde morspeche shal bene aftir þe Purificacioun of our Levedy.¹⁰ Þe thred, aftir þe feste of Phelip and Jacob.¹¹ Þe 20 fourte, aftir þe feste of Seynt Petre *Ad Vincula*.¹² Alleso it is ordeyned, be on assent of þe brethren, be als mechil as¹³ þe lyght fornseide ne may nout be meyntened in þe tyme for to come, every man þat wille with good devocion comyn into þis ffraternite shal pay iii s. Alleso, if any brothir or sistir deye, þe aldirman shal comand þe oficere to 25 warnyn alle þe bretheryn and sisteryn to bryng þe cors to þe chirche,

¹ Lynn (King's Lynn, of Norfolk)

² provide

³ one pound

⁴ MS. overy

⁵ St. Leonard's day is Nov. 6

⁶ a half-penny (obolus)

⁷ periodical assemblies held on the morrow after the guild-feast

⁸ choose

⁹ property

¹⁰ Feb. 2

¹¹ Philip and James; May 1

¹² Aug. 1

¹³ inasmuch as

with waxe brennend, and þe waxe for to brenne in þe tyme of service. And every broþir and sistir shal offren at þe messe for þe body ob. 5
 Ȝefe any broþir or sistir of þis company be in any mischefe, þorow losse of þe se,¹ or any other myshappes, þorow Godes² sond,³ þe company shal ben gadered togedir and helpyn hym. Ȝefe any broþer or
 sistir of þis gild dye within a mile abouten, and have nout whercof to
 bryng hym to þe erthe,⁴ þe aldirman and þe gilde-brethren shuln wend
 and bryng hym to þe erthe on þeire owe costages.⁵ And if any broþir
 dye within þe iii mile aboutyn, þe aldirman shal gon and beryne⁶ hym,
 10 or ellis hyren a man of here costages to bryng hym to þe erthe. Þere
 shal no broþir ne sistir sene oþir in prison, þat⁷ he shal comyn and
 vesyten hym, and comfordyn hym in his powere. Also, if any broþir
 or sistir of þis gild dye, he shal have xv messes songyn for his soule.
 Also, what man or woman of þis gilde be rebel ageyne þe lawe of
 15 Holy Chirche, he shal lese⁸ þe fraternite of þis gilde tille he come to
 amendment.

Be it open to zow, be þes presentes, þat we, fulliche undirstondend
 zour lettres sent to us, seyend on þis manere, þat we shuld send zow
 a kopy of our statuz, and also þe summe of our katel, we do zow
 20 openliche to wetyn þat þe summe of our katel is xxi s. viii d., redy to
 our lord þe kinges wille.

¹ at sea² MS. goodes³ dispensation⁴ bury him⁵ at their own expense⁶ bury⁷ but that⁸ lose

TRANSLATIONS

CHAUCEUR, THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

The *Roman de la Rose*, one of the most celebrated and influential poems of the Middle Ages, is the work of two poets, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the former writing about 1237, and the latter about 1277. Of the 22,817 lines in Michel's edition (the most accessible), Guillaume wrote 4669, and Jean the remainder. Gaston Paris has characterized Guillaume's part by its use of the dream as a frame; of allegory (the maiden as a rose); of a garden as the scene of the poem; and of personification. Jean de Meun's part is more formless, and makes much parade of learning.

The translation into Middle English consists of 7698 lines. Until about 1868 Chaucer's authorship of the whole of this version was not doubted, especially as Cupid is represented as saying to Chaucer, in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (B):

For in pleyn text, withouten nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the Rose.

At present three divisions are recognized: 1-1705 (A), 1706-5810 (B), 5811-7698 (C), corresponding respectively to 1-1678, 1679-5875, and 11,444-13,299 of the French (Michel's edition). Nearly all scholars agree that A is by Chaucer, and that B is not; Kaluza believes that C is also by Chaucer, but this view has not been generally accepted.

Through Guillaume de Digulleville, or Guileville (d. about 1360), the French *Roman* may have had an influence on the *Pilgrim's Progress* (see Hammond, Chaucer, pp. 76-7).

For the French original, see Gaston Paris, *Litt. Fr. au Moyen Age*, chap. 5; Petit de Julleville, *Hist. de la Langue et de la Litt. Fr.* 2. 105-61 (Langlois); Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 78-9; where bibliographies may be found. The *Roman* has been translated into English by F. S. Ellis (Temple Classics, 3 vols.). For a bibliography of the English translation, see Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 450-4.

The subjoined text is based upon the reprint of the unique manuscript (Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, V. 3. 7) by Kaluza, issued by the Chaucer Society in 1891. Omissions in the manuscript have been supplied from Thynne's edition, and a few emendations have been admitted. The extracts below are, respectively, lines 49-89, 110-43, 349-68. To lines 71-89 of the version I subjoin 67-83 of the French (Michel), for the purpose of comparison.

THE JOYS OF SPRING

That it was May me thought[e] tho,
 It is v yere or more ago ;
 That it was May, thus dremed me,
 In tyme of love and jolite,
 That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
 For ther is neither busk ¹ nor hay ²
 In May, that it nyl shrouded ³ bene,
 And it with newe leves wrene.⁴
 These wodes eek recoveren gr[e]ne,
 That drie in wynter ben to sene ;
 And the erth wexith proude withall,
 For swote ⁵ dewes that on it fall,
 And the pore estat forgette
 In which that winter had it sette ;
 And than bycometh the ground so proude
 That it wole have a newe shroude,
 And makith so queynt his robe and faire
 That it hath ⁶ hewes an hundred payre
 Of gras and flouris, ynde ⁷ and pers,⁸
 And many hewes ful dyvers ;
 [That is the robe I] ⁹ mene, iwis,
 [Through whiche the] ground to preisen ¹⁰ is.
 [The byrdes, that ha]ven lefte her song,
 While thei [han suffr]ide cold so strong
 In wedres gryl,¹¹ and derk to sight,
 Ben in May, for the sonne bright,
 So glade, that they shewe in syngyng
 That in her hertis is sich lykyng
 That they mote syngen and be light.
 Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght

¹ bush
² hedge
³ clothed
⁴ cover

⁵ sweet
⁶ MS. had (em. Skeat)
⁷ dark blue (indigo)
⁸ sky-blue

⁹ From Thynne's edition,
 and so the next lines
¹⁰ to be praised, admired
¹¹ disagreeable

To make noyse, and syngen blythe;
 Than is blisful, many sithe,
 The chela[un]dre¹ and [the] papyngay.²
 Than yong[e] folk entenden ay
 For to ben gay and amorous, 5
 The tyme is than so faverous.³
 Hard is the hert that loveth nought
 In May, whan al this mirth is wrought,
 Whan he may on these braunches here
 The smale briddes syngen clere 10
 Her blesful swete song pitous.

Li oisel, qui se sunt teü
 Tant com il ont le froit eü,
 Et le tens divers et frarin,
 Sunt en Mai, por le tens serin,
 Si lié qu'il monstrent en chantant 5
 Qu'en lor cuer a de joie tant,
 Qu'il lor estuet chanter par force.
 Li rossignos lores s'esforce
 De chanter et de faire noise;
 Lors s'esvertue, et lors s'envoise 10
 Li papegaus et la kalandre:
 Lors estuet jones gens entendre
 A estre gais et amoreus
 Por le tens bel et doucereus.
 Moult a dur cuer qui en Mai n'aime, 15
 Quant il ot chanter sus la raimé
 As oisiaus les dous chans piteus.

¹ a kind of lark (a Mediterranean species)² parrot, popinjay³ favorable

THE RIVER AND THE GARD.

Toward a ryver gan I me dresse
 That I herd renne fast[e] by;
 For fairer playng non saugh I
 Than playen me by that ryvere,
 5 For from an hill that stood ther nei
 Cam down the streme ful stif and t
 Cleer was the water, and as cold
 [As any welle is, sot]² h to seyn;
 [And somdele lasse³] it was than S
 10 [But it was stray]ghter wel away.
 [And never sau]gh I, er that day,
 The watir that so wel lyked⁴ me;
 And wondir glad was I to se
 That lusty place, and that ryvere;
 15 And with that watir that ran so cle
 My face I wysse.⁵ Tho saugh I
 The botme paved everydell
 With gravel, ful of stones shene.⁶
 The medewe softe, swote,⁷ and gre
 20 Beet⁸ right on the watirsyde.
 Ful clere was than the morowtyde,¹
 And ful attempre,¹⁰ out of drede.
 Tho gan I walk thorough the mede
 Dounward ay in my pleiying,
 25 The ryversyde costeiyng.¹¹
 And whan I had a while goon,
 I saugh a gardyn right anoon,
 Ful long and brood, and everydell
 Enclosed was, and walled well,
 30 With high[e] walles enbatailled,
 Portraied without, and wel entailed¹²

¹ direct

² From Thynne, and so next lines

³ smaller

⁴ pleased

⁵ washed

⁶ glistening

⁷ sweet

⁸ adjoined (*lit.* beat upon)

⁹ morning

¹⁰ mild

¹¹ coasting,

¹² carved

With many riche portraitures;
 And bothe the ymages and the peyntures
 Gan I biholde bysyly.

THE PICTURE OF OLD AGE

Elde¹ was [i]paynted after this,
 That shorter was a foote, iwys, 5
 Than she was wont in her yonghede.²
 Unneth³ herselfe she might[e] fede;
 So feble and eke so olde was she
 That faded was al her beaute.
 Ful salowe was waxen hir coloure, 10
 Hir heed for hore⁴ was whyte as floure;
 Iwys, great qualme⁵ ne were it none,
 Ne synne, although her lyfe were gone.
 Al woxen was her body unwelde,⁶
 And drie and dwyned⁷ al for elde; 15
 A foule forwelked⁸ thyng was she
 That whylom rounde and soft had be.
 Hir eeres shoken faste withall,
 As from her heed they wolde fall.
 Her face frounced⁹ and forpyned,¹⁰ 20
 And bothe hir hondes lorne,¹¹ fordwyned.¹²
 So olde she was that she ne went
 A foote, but it were by potent.¹³

¹ old age
² youth
³ with difficulty
⁴ hoariness
⁵ evil

⁶ unwieldy, impotent
⁷ dwindled
⁸ withered
⁹ wrinkled

¹⁰ wasted away
¹¹ forlorn
¹² shrunken
¹³ crutch

yit armures.¹ For wherto or which woodnesse² of enemys wolde first moeven³ armes, [21-26] whan they seyen cruel woundes, ne none medes⁴ be of blood yshad? I wolde that oure tymes sholde torne ayein to the olde maneres! But the anguissous⁵ love of havinge bren-neth in folk more cruelly than the fyr of the mountaigne Ethna, *that ay* 5 *brenneth*. [27-30] Allas! what was he that first dalf⁶ up the gobetes⁷ or the weightes of gold covered under erthe, and the precious stones that wolden han ben hid? He dalf up precious perils. *That is to seyn,* *that he that hem first up dalf, he dalf up a precious peril; forwhy*⁸ *for the preciousnesse of swiche thinge hath many man ben in peril.* 10

[Prose] But what shal I seye of dignitees and of powers, the whiche ye men, that neither knowen verray⁹ dignitee ne verray power, areysen¹⁰ hem as heye as the hevene? The whiche dignitees and powers, yif they comen to any wikked man, they don as grete damages and destrucciouns as doth the flaumbe¹¹ of the mountaigne 15 Ethna, whan the flaumbe walweth¹² up; ne no deluge ne doth so cruel harmes.

Felix nimium prior ætas,
 Contenta fidelibus arvis
 Nec inertī perdita luxu, 20
 Facili quæ sera solebat
 Jejunia solvere glande.
 Non Bacchica munera norant
 Liquido confundere melle,
 Nec lucida vellera Serum 25
 Tyrio miscere veneno.
 Somnos dabat herba salubres,
 Potum quoque lubricus amnis,
 Umbras altissima pinus.
 Nondum maris alta secabat, 30
 Nec mercibus undique lectis
 Nova litora viderat hospes.

¹ armor
² madness, rage
³ stir up
⁴ rewards

⁵ tormenting
⁶ dug
⁷ lumps
⁸ wherefore

⁹ true
¹⁰ exalt
¹¹ flame
¹² rolls, tosses

TRANSLATIONS

Tunc classica sæva tacebant,
 Odiis neque fusus acerbis
 Cruor horrida tinxerat arva.
 Quid enim furor hosticus ulla
 Vellet prior arma movere,
 Cum vulnera sæva viderent,
 Nec præmia sanguinis ulla?
 Utinam modo nostra redirent
 In mores tempora priscos!
 Sed, sævior ignibus Ætnæ,
 Fervens amor ardet habendi.
 Heu! primus quis fuit ille
 Auri qui pondera tecti,
 Gemmasque latere volentes,
 Pretiosa pericula, fodit?

Quid autem de dignitatibus potentiaque disseram, qua vos veræ dignitatis ac potestatis inscii cælo exæquatis? Quæ si in improbissimum quemque ceciderunt quæ flammis Ætnæ eructuantibus, quod diluvium tantas strages dederint?

Trēowa wæstmas hī æton and wyrta; nalles scīr wīn hī ne druncon,
 nē nanne wætan hī ne cūpon wið hunige mengan, nē seolocentra hragla
 mid mistlicum blēowum hī ne gīmdon. Ealne weg hī slēpon ūte on
 triowa sceadam; hlūterra wella wæter hī druncon. Ne geseah nān
 x̅pa ēaland ne weroð, nē gehērde nōn mon þā gēt nāne sciphere.

And hī æne on dæge æton symle
 On æfentīd eorþan wæstmas,
 Wudes and wyrta; nalles wīn druncon
 Scīr of stēape. Næs þā scealca nān
 þe mete oððe drinc mængan cūðe,
 Wæter wið hunige, nē heora wæda þon mā
 Sioloce siowian, nē hī siarocræftum
 Godweb giredon, nē hī gimreced
 Setton searolice, ac hī simle him
 Eallum tidum ūte slēpon

Under bēamsceade; druncon burnan wæter,
 Calde wellan. Nænig cēpa ne seah
 Ofer ēargeblond ellendne wearod,
 Nē hūru ymbe sciphergas sǣtilcas ne hērdon.

THE FORMER AGE

A blysful lyf, a paysyble and a swete, 5
 Ledden the poeples in the former age;
 They helde hem paied ¹ of fructes ² þat þey ete,
 Whiche þat the feldes yave hem by usage ³;
 They ne weere nat forpampred ⁴ with owtrage. ⁵
 Onknowyn was þe quyerne ⁶ and ek the melle ⁷; 10
 They eten mast, hawes, and swych pownage, ⁸
 And dronken water of the colde welle.

Yit nas the grownd nat wownded with þe plowh,
 But corn upsprong, unsowe of mannes hond,
 Þe which they gnodded, ⁹ and eete nat half inowh. 15
 No man yit knewe the forwes ¹⁰ of his lond;
 No man the fyr owt of the flynt yit fonde;
 Unkorven ¹¹ and ungrobbed ¹² lay the vyne;
 No man yit in the mortar spices grond,
 To ¹³ clarre ne to sawse of galentyne. ¹⁴ 20

No madyr, ¹⁵ welde, ¹⁶ or wod ¹⁷ no litestere ¹⁸
 Ne knewh; the fles ¹⁹ was of [h]is former hewe;
 No flessh ne wyste offence of egge ²⁰ or spere;
 No coyn ne knewh man which was ²¹ fals or trewe;

¹ satisfied² MS. the fructes³ customarily, regularly⁴ pampered⁵ excess⁶ hand-mill⁷ mill⁸ swine's food⁹ rubbed, bruised; cf. *Rom.**Rosc* 9124 (the wholepassage seems imitated
from Boethius): 'Et des
espis des blés frotoient'¹⁰ furrows¹¹ unpruned¹² not digged round¹³ for¹⁴ a mixture of ginger, grated
bread, vinegar, etc.¹⁵ madder¹⁶ dyeweed, yellowweed¹⁷ woad¹⁸ dyer¹⁹ fleece²⁰ edge²¹ MS. is

No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe;
 No marchaunt yit ne fette owtlandissh ware;
 No trompes¹ for the werres folk ne knewe,
 Ne towres heye, and walles rownde or square.

5 What sholde it han awayled to werreye²?
 Ther lay no profyt, ther was no rychesse;
 But corsed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
 þat men fyrst dede hir swety bysynesse
 To grobbe up metal, lurkyng in derknesse,³
 10 And in þe ryverys fyrst[e] gemmys sowhte.
 Allas! than sprong up al the cursydnesse
 Of coveytyse, þat fyrst ovr sorwe browhte.

WYCLIFFITE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

The extracts here given are from the second Wycliffite version of the Vulgate (ca. 1388), which is not so awkwardly literal as the earlier (ca. 1380). An interesting study of the Wycliffite Epistle to the Romans, compared with the Latin and another (fragmentary) Middle English rendering, has been published by Dr. Emma C. Tucker (*Yale Studies in English*, No. 49).

JOB 41. 20-28; 42. 4-25

Whether thou schalt mowe drawe out levyathan with an hook, and
 schalt bynde with a roop his tunge? Whethir thou schalt putte a
 15 ryng in hise nosethirlis, ethir schalt perse hyse cheke with an hook?
 Whether he schal multiplie preieris to thee, ether schal speke softe
 thingis to thee? Whether he schal make covenant with thee, and
 thou schalt take him a servaunt everlastinge? Whether thou schalt
 scorne hym as a brid, ethir schalt bynde hym to thin handmaidis?
 20 Schulen frendis kerve hym? schulen marchauntis departe hym?
 Whether thou schalt fille nettis with his skyn, and a leep⁴ of fischis
 with his heed? Schalt thou putte thin hond on hym? have thou
 mynde of the batel, and adde no more to speke. Lo, his hope schal
 disseyve hym; and in the sikt of alle men he schal be cast down. . . .

¹ MS. batails trompes

² fight

³ MS. dirkenesse

⁴ basket

Who schal schewe the face of his clothing, and who schal entre into the myddis of his mouth? Who schal opene the zatis of his cheer¹? ferdfulnesse² is bi the cumpas of hise teeth. His bodi is as gotun³ scheldys of bras, and joyned togidere with scalis overleiynge hemsilf.⁴ Oon is joyned to another, and sotheli brething goith not thoroug⁵ tho.⁵ Oon schal cleve to anothir, and tho holdynge hemsilf schulen not be departid.⁶ His fnesynge⁷ is as schynyng of fier, and hise igen⁸ ben as igelidis of the morewtid.⁹ Laumpis comen forth of his mouth, as trees¹⁰ of fier that ben kyndlid. Smoke cometh forth of hise nosethirlis, as of a pot set on the fier and boilynge. His breeth¹⁰ maketh colis to brenne, and flawme goith out of his mouth. Strengthe schal dwelle in his necke, and nedynesse¹¹ schal go bifor his face. The membris of hise fleischis ben clevynge togidere to hemsilf; God schal sende floodis¹² agens hym, and tho schulen not be borun to another place. His herte schal be maad hard as a stoon; and it schal be¹⁵ streyned¹³ togidere as the anefeld¹⁴ of a smith. Whanne he schal be takun awei, aungels schulen drede; and thei, aferd, schulen be purgid.¹⁶ Whanne swerd takith hym, it may not stonde, nethir spere, nether haburjoun.¹⁶ For he schal arette irun as chaffis, and bras as rotun tre. A man archere schal not dryve hym awei; stoonys of a slyng ben²⁰ turned into stobil to hym. He schal arette¹⁷ an hamer as stobil,¹⁸ and he schal scorne a florischyng¹⁹ spere. The beemys of the sunne schulen be undur hym; and he schal strewe to hymself gold as cley. He schal make the depe se to buyle as a pot; and he schal putte²⁰ as whanne oynementis buylen. A path schal schyne aftir hym; he²⁵ schal gesse²¹ the greet occian as wexynge eld. No power is on erthe that schal be comparisound to hym, which is maad that he schulde drede noon. He seeth al hig thing; he is kyng over alle the sones of pride.

1 face
2 terror
3 molten
4 one another
5 them
6 separated
7 sneezing

8 eyes
9 morning
10 torches
11 want, poverty
12 Lat. *fulmina*, read as *flumina*
13 compacted
14 anvil

15 purified
16 breastplate
17 esteem
18 stubble
19 brandishing, waving
20 regard (it)
21 esteem

JOHN 17. 1-6

These thingis Jesus spak, and whanne he hadde cast up hise igen into hevene, he seide: 'Fadir, the our cometh; clarifie¹ thi sone, that thi sone clarifie thee; as thou hast govun to hym power on ech fleisch, that al thing that thou hast govun to hym, he gyve to hem
 5 everlastynge liif. And this is everlastynge liif, that thei knowe thee very God aloone, and whom thou hast sent, Jesu Crist. Y have clarified thee on the erthe; Y have endid the werk that thou hast govun to me to do. And now, Fadir, clarifie thou me at² thisilf, with the clerenesse³ that Y hadde at thee bifor the world was maad. Y
 10 have schewid thi name to tho men whiche thou hast govun to me of the world; thei weren thine, and thou hast govun hem to me, and thei han kept thi word.

REVELATION 14

And Y sai, and lo! a Lomb stood on the mount of Sion, and with hym an hundrid thousynde and foure and fourti thousynde, havynge
 15 his name, and the name of his Fadir, writun in her forhedis. And Y herde a vois fro hevene, as the vois of many watris, and as the vois of a greet thundur; and the vois which is herd was as of many harperis harpinge in her harpis; and thei sungun as a newe song bifor the seete⁴ of God, and bfore the foure beestis and senyouris;
 20 and no man mihte seie the song but thei, an hundrid thousynde and

¹ glorify² with; Lat. *apud*³ glory⁴ throne

1. thingis: cf. the Old English of verses 1-3:

Ðas þing se Hælend spræc, and āhōf ūpp his ēagan tō heofenum, and cwæð: 'Fæder, tīd ys cūmen; geswutela þīnne Sunu, þæt þīn Sunu geswutelige þē; and swā þū him sealdest anweald ælces mannes, þæt he sylle ēce lif eallum þām þe þū him sealdest. Ðis ys sōþlice ēce lif, þæt hī oncnāwon þæt þū eart ān sōþ God, and se þe þū sendest, Hælynde Crist.'

Tyndale has:

These wordes spake Jesus, and lifte uppe his eyes to heven, and sayde: 'Father, the houre is come; glorify thy Sonne, that thy Sonne maye glorify the; as thou hast geven hym power over all fleshe, that he shulde geve eternall life to as many as thou hast geven him. This is life eternall, that they myght knowe the, that only very God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.'

foure and fourti thousynde, that ben bougt fro the erthe. These it ben that ben not defoulid with wymmen, for thei ben virgyns. These suen the Lomb whidir ever he schal go. These ben bougt of alle men, the firste fruytis to God and to the Lomb; and in the mouth of hem lesyng¹ is not foundun, for thei ben without wem² bifor the trone of God. And Y say another aungel, fliynge bi the myddil of hevene, havynge an everlastinge gospel that he schulde preche to men sittynge on erthe, and on ech folk, and lynage, and langage, and puple; and seide with a greet vois: 'Drede ȝe the Lord, and ȝyve ȝe to hym onour, for the our of his dom cometh; and worschipe ȝe hym that made hevene and erthe, the see, and alle thingis that ben in hem, and the wellis of watris.' And anothir aungel sude,³ seiynge: 'Thilke greet Babiloyne fel doun, fel doun, which ȝaf drinke to alle folkis of the wyn of wraththe of her fornycacioun.' And the thridde aungel sude hem, and seide with a greet vois: 'If ony man worschipe the beeste and the ymage of it, and takith the carecter⁴ in his forheed, ether in his hoond, this schal drynke of the wyn of Goddis wraththe, that is meynd⁵ with clere wyn in the cuppe of his wraththe, and schal be turmentid with fier and brymston, in the sigt of hooli aungels, and bifore the sigt of the Lomb; and the smoke of her turmentis schal stie⁶ up into the worldis of worldis; nether thei han reste dai and nigt, whiche worschipiden the beeste and his ymage, and yf ony man take the carect of his name. Here is the pacience of seyntis, whiche kepen the maundementis of God, and the feith of Jesu.' And Y herde a vois fro hevene seiynge to me: 'Write thou, Blessid ben deed men that dien in the Lord; fro hennus forth now the Spirit seith that thei reste of her travailis; for the werkis of hem suen hem.' And Y say,⁷ and lo a white cloude, and above the cloude a sittere, liik the Sone of man, havynge in his heed a goldun coroun, and in his hond a scharp sikil. And another aungel wente out of the temple, and criede with greet vois to hym that sat on the cloude: 'Sende thi sikil, and repe, for the our cometh that it be ropun; for the corn of the erthe is ripe.' And he that sat on the cloude sente his sikil into the erthe, and rap the erthe. And another aungel wente out of the temple that is in

¹ falsehood
² blemish

³ followed
⁴ mark

⁵ mingled
⁶ rise

⁷ looked

hevene, and he also hadde a scharp sikile. And another aungel wente out fro the auter, that hadde power on fier and water; and he criede with a greet vois to hym that hadde the scharp sikil, and seide: 'Sende thi scharp sikil, and kitte awei the clustris of the vyngerd of the erthe, for the grapis of it ben ripe.' And the aungel sente his sikil into the erthe, and gaderide grapis of the vyngerd of the erthe, and sente into the greet lake of Goddis wraththe. And the lake was troddun without the citee, and the bloode wente out of the lake til to the bridels of horsis, bi furlongis a thousynd and six hundrid.

VERSIONS OF PSALM 51. 1-3

LATIN

- 10 Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam; et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea, et a peccato meo munda me: Quoniam iniquitatem meam cognosco, et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

ABOUT 1200

Vices and Virtues, in Smyth, *Biblical Quotations in Middle English Literature* (Yale Studies in English, No. 41), p. 42.

- 15 Hlaverd, . . . after-ðat-ðe ðin mildce ys michel, have ore of mine michele senne; and after ðine manifealde mildces ðe ðu hafst ihafð to mankenne, Hlaverd, do awei fram me ðese michele unrihtwisnesse.

A.D. 1300-1350

Bülbring, *Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, p. 60

- Ha mercy on me, God, efter þy mychel mercy; and efter þe mychelnes of þy pites do way my wickednes. Whasshe me more of my wickednes, and clense me of myn synne. For ich knowe my wickednes, and my synne ys evermore ogains me.

A.D. 1350-1400

Horstmann, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 182-3

God, þou have mercy of me,
 After mikel mercy of þe;
 And after of þi reupes þe mikelnes
 Þou do awai mi wickednes.
 Nou mare me wasche of min ivel bidene,
 And of mi sinne þou klens me klene.
 For mi wicke[d]nes I knaw þat I am inne,
 And ai ogain me es mi sinne.

5

ABOUT 1388

Wycliffe

God, have thou merci on me, bi thi greet merci; and bi the mychil-
 nes of thi merciful doyngis do thou awei my wickidnesse. More 10
 waische thou me fro my wickidnesse, and clense thou me fro my
 synne. For Y knoueleche my wickidnesse, and my synne is evere
 ageyns me.

ABOUT 1460

Political, Religious, and Love Songs (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15), pp. 279-80

Mercy, God, of my mysdede,
 For þi mercy þat mychel ys;
 Lat þi pite sprynge and sprede,
 Off þi mercy þat I ne mys.
 After gostly grace I grede¹;
 Good God, þou graunt me þis,
 Þat I may lyve in love and drede,
 And never after do² more amys.

15

20

And after þi mercies þat ben fele,³
 Lord, fordo my wickydnese;

3yve me grace to hyde and hele
 The blame of my bruchelnesse.
 3if any sterynge¹ on me stele
 Out of þe clos of þi clennesses,
 5 Wysse me, Lord, in wo and weele,
 And kepe me fram unkyndnesse.

Moreover, wasche me of my synne,
 And of my gultes clanse þow me;
 And serche my soule without and inne,
 10 That I no more defowlid be.
 And as þyn hert aclef atwynne²
 With doleful deth on þe rode-tre,
 Late me never no werke bigynne,
 Lord, but-ȝif³ it lyke þee.

15 For al my wickidnesse I knowe,
 And my synne is ever me aȝeyn;
 Therfore late þi grace growe,
 Jesu, þat was with Jewis sleyn.
 Ryche and pore, hye and lowe,
 20 Smale and gret[e], in certeyn,
 Atte Domesdaie, when þou schalt blowe,
 Of þi mercy schul be ful feyn.

A.D. 1535

Coverdale

Have mercy upon me (O God), after thy goodnes; and acordinge
 unto thy greate mercies do awaye myne offences. Wash me well fro
 25 my wickednesse, and clense me fro my synne. For I knowlege my
 fautes, and my synne is ever before me.

¹ guidance (?); stirring (?)

² burst in twain

³ unless

A.D. 1560

Geneva Version

Have mercie upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindenes ;
according to the multitude of thy compassions put awaie mine iniqui-
ties. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me from my
sinne. For I knowe mine iniquities, and my sinne is ever before me.

A.D. 1611

Authorized Version

Have mercie upon mee, O God, according to thy loving kindnesse ; 5
according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my trans-
gressions. Wash mee thoroughly from mine iniquitie, and clense me
from my sinne. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sinne
is ever before mee.

LYRICS

CUCKOO SONG

About 1240 (*New Eng. Dict.*). From MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 978, where accompanied by the music. The author of this rondel, rota, or round, perhaps have been John of Fornsete, a monk of the abbey of Reading. The melody is of considerable importance in the history of English music. Some musical critics have spoken of 'this amazing production,' of its 'ingenuity and beauty,' of 'the airy and pastoral correspondence between the words and the music.' See Grove's *Dict. Music*, 2d ed., 4. 745-54 (cf. 3. 750-1, 765); *Oxford Hist. Music* 1. 326-38 (Wooldridge); *Trans. Phil. Soc.* for 1868, p. 103 E.E.T.S. 7. 419-28. There are facsimiles in Grove (4. 748), Chappell, *Pop Music of the Olden Time*, and the facsimiles of the Palæographical Society, Part 8, Pl. 125.

Sing, cuccu, nu¹! Sing, cuccu!
Sing, cuccu! Sing, cuccu, nu!

Sumer is icumen in;

Lhude² sing, cuccu!

Growep³ sed, and blowep⁴ med,⁴
And springp⁵ pe wde⁶ nu.

Sing, cuccu!

Awe⁶ bletep⁷ after lomb,

Lhoup⁷ after calve cu;

Bulluc stertep,⁸ bucke vertep⁹;

Murie¹⁰ sing, cuccu!

Cuccu! cuccu!

Wel singes pu, cuccu;

Ne swik¹¹ pu naver¹² nu.

¹ now
² loudly
³ blooms
⁴ mead, meadow
⁵ wood

⁶ ewe
⁷ lows
⁸ bounds, frisks (cf. Chaucer, *K.T.* 644: 'a courser, sterting as the fyr')

⁹ pedit (L.)
¹⁰ merrily
¹¹ cease
¹² never

SPRING

About 1310. From Böddeker, *Altenglische Dichtungen des MS. Harl. 2253*, pp. 164-5.

Lenten ys come wip love to tounē,¹
 Wip blosmen and wip briddes rounē,²
 þat al þis blisse bryngeþ;
 Dayeseȝes³ in þis⁴ dales,
 Notes suete of nyhtegales;
 Uch foul song singeþ.
 The prestelcoc him þreteþ⁵ oo⁶;
 Away is huere⁷ wynter woo,
 When woderove⁸ springeþ.
 þis foules singeþ ferly fele,⁹
 Ant wlyteþ¹⁰ on huere wynter wele,¹¹
 þat al þe wode ryngēþ.

þe rose rayleþ¹² hire rode¹³;
 The leues on þe lyhte¹⁴ wode
 Waxen al wip wille.¹⁵
 þe mone mandeþ¹⁶ hire bleo¹⁷;
 þe lilie is lossom¹⁸ to seo,
 þe fenyl¹⁹ and þe fille.²⁰
 Wowes²¹ þis wilde drakes;
 Miles²² murgeþ²³ huere makes,²⁴
 Ase strem þat strikeþ²⁵ stille.
 Mody²⁶ menēþ,²⁷ so doþ²⁸ mo²⁹;
 Ichot Ycham³⁰ on of þo,
 For love þat likes ille.³¹

¹ spring has made its appearance, with love

² song

³ daisies

⁴ these

⁵ disputes with himself (?)

⁶ ever

⁷ their

⁸ woodruff

⁹ wonderfully much

¹⁰ look back

¹¹ winter's well-being (ironical?)

¹² puts on (as a garment)

¹³ ruddiness

¹⁴ fluttering, trembling (transferred epithet, belonging properly to 'leaves')

¹⁵ eagerly

¹⁶ sends forth

¹⁷ color

¹⁸ lovely

¹⁹ fennel

²⁰ chervil

²¹ woo

²² animals (so Mätzner)

²³ delight

²⁴ mates

²⁵ flows

²⁶ disconsolate ones? (cf. Shakespeare, *King John* 4. 1. 15-16)

²⁷ lament

²⁸ MS. doh

²⁹ others

³⁰ I know I am

³¹ annoys, vexes

LYRICS

þe mone mandeþ hire lyht;
 So doþ þe semly¹ sonne bryht.
 When briddes singeþ brene.²
 Deawes donkeþ³ þe dounes;
 Deores⁴ w[r]ip⁵ huere derne rounes,
 Domes for te deme⁷;
 Wormes woweþ under cloude⁸;
 Wymmen waxeþ wounder proude,
 So wel hit wol hem seme.⁹
 3ef me shal wonte wille of on,¹⁰
 þis worldes¹¹ weole¹² Y wole forgon,¹³
 Ant wyht¹⁴ in wode¹⁵ be fleme.¹⁶

WHEN THE NIGHTINGALE SINGS

About 1310. From Böddeker, p. 174

When þe nyhtegale singes,
 þe wodes waxen grene,
 Lef ant gras ant blosme springes
 In Averyl, Y wene;
 Ant love is to myn herte gon
 Wip one¹⁷ spere so kene,
 Nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes,
 Myn herte deþ to¹⁸ tene.¹⁹

Ich have loved al þis ȝer,
 þat Y may love na more;
 Ich have siked²⁰ moni syk,
 Lemmon,²¹ for þin ore²²;

¹ goodly
² gaily
³ wet
⁴ animals
⁵ divulge; cf. Chaucer,
Compl. Mars 91; *T.*
and C. 2. 537
⁶ their secret communings
⁷ sentiments to express

⁸ clod
⁹ beseech, become
¹⁰ if I shall fail to have
 my will of one
¹¹ MS. wunne
¹² weal
¹³ forego
¹⁴ bold (?)
¹⁵ forest

¹⁶ fugitive
¹⁷ a
¹⁸ Wright (*Spec. L.*, p. 1)
 p. 92), me
¹⁹ distress, anguish
²⁰ sighed
²¹ sweetheart
²² favor, grace

Me nis love never þe ner,¹
 Ant þat me rewep sore;
 Suete lemmon, þench on me,
 Ich have loved þe ȝore.²

Suete lemmon, Y preye þee
 Of love one speche;
 Whil Y lyve in world so wyde
 Oþer nulle³ Y seche.
 Wip þy love, my suete leof,⁴
 My blis þou mihtes eche⁵;
 A suete cos⁶ of þy mouth
 Mihte be my leche.⁷

Suete lemmon, Y preȝe þee
 Of a love-bene⁸;
 Ȝef þou me lovest, ase men says,
 Lemmon, as I wene,
 Ant ȝef hit þi wille be,
 þou loke þat hit be sene;
 So muchel Y þenke upon þe
 þat al Y waxe grene.⁹

Bituene Lyncolne ant Lyndeseye,¹⁰
 Norhamptoun ant Lounde,¹¹
 Ne wot I non so fayr a may,
 As I go fore ybounde.¹²
 Suete lemmon, Y preȝe þe
 þou lovie me a stounde¹³;
 Y wole mone my song
 On wham hit ys ylong.¹⁴

¹ nearer² long³ will not⁴ dear⁵ augment⁶ like⁷ healing⁸ love-boon⁹ pale¹⁰ Lindsey in Suffolk, about
100 miles from Lincoln¹¹ London, about 57 miles from
Northampton¹² as I go in bondage for¹³ for a time¹⁴ to whom it belongs; MS. on
wham hit ys on ylong

ALISON

About 1310. From Bōddeker, pp. 147-8. Translation in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 308-9.

*An hendy hap Ichabbe yhent¹;
Ichot² from hevene it is me sent;
From alle wymmen mi love is lent,³
And lyht⁴ on Alysoun.*

- 5 Bytuene Mersh and Averil,
When spray biginneþ to springe,
þe lutel foul hap hire wyl
On hyre lud⁶ to synge.
Ich libbe in love-longinge
10 For semlokest⁶ of alle þinge;
He⁷ may me blisse bringe —
Icham in hire baundoun.⁸
- On⁹ heu hire her¹⁰ is fayr ynoh,
Hire browe broune, hire ege blake;
15 Wijþ lossum chere¹¹ he on me loh¹²;
Wijþ middel¹³ smal and wel ymake.¹⁴
Bote¹⁵ he me wolle to hire take,
For te buen¹⁶ hire owen make,¹⁷
Longe to lyven Ichulle¹⁸ forsake,
20 And feye¹⁹ fallen adoun.
- Nihtes when Y wende²⁰ and wake,
Forþi²¹ myn wonges²² waxeþ won;
Levedi, al for pine sake
Longinge is ylent me on.²³

1 I have won a fair fate

2 I know

3 turned

4 has lighted

5 language

6 comeliest, goodliest

7 she

8 power

9 in

10 hair

11 loving mien

12 laughed

13 waist

14 made

15 unless

16 be

17 mate

18 I shall

19 death-stricken

20 wander

21 on this account

22 cheeks

23 appointed to me

In world nis non so wyter¹ mon
 þat al hire bounte telle con.
 Hire swyre² is whittore þen þe swon,
 And feyrest may³ in toune.

Icham for wowyng⁴ al forwake,⁵
 Wery so⁶ water in wore.⁷
 Lest eny reve⁸ me my make,
 Ychabbe ygzerned⁹ gore.¹⁰
 Betere is polien whyle sore¹¹
 þen mournen evermore.
 Geynest¹² under gore,¹³
 Herkne to my roun.¹⁴

CHAUCER, BIRD-SONG

Roundel, from the *Parliament of Birds* (about 1382?)

*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
 That hast this wintres weders¹⁵ overshake,¹⁶
 And driven away the longe nightes blake!*

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy onlofte,¹⁷
 Thus singen smale foules for thy sake:
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
 That hast this wintres weders overshake.*

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
 Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
 Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake:
*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
 That hast this wintres weders overshake,
 And driven away the longe nightes blake!*

1 wise
 2 neck
 3 maid
 4 yearning
 5 overwatched
 6 as

7 weir (?)
 8 rob
 9 yearned
 10 long
 11 to suffer sorely for a time
 12 loveliest

13 in body (*lit.* under gore, i.e.
 under garment)
 14 lay, song
 15 storms
 16 dispelled
 17 aloft

BLOW, NORTHERN WIND

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 168-71

*Blow, northerne wynd,
Send¹ þou me my suetyng!
Blow, norþerne wynd,
Blou! blou! blou!*

Ichot² a burde³ in boure bryht,
þat fully semly is on syht,⁴
Mensful⁵ maiden of myht,
Feir ant fre⁶ to fonde⁷;
In al þis wurhliche won,⁸
A burde of blod and of bon
Never ȝete Y nuste⁹ non
Lussomore¹⁰ in londe.

Wip lokkes lefliche¹¹ and longe,
Wip frount¹² and face feir to fonde,
Wip murpes monie mote heo monge,¹³
þat brid¹⁴ so brene¹⁵ in boure;
Wip lossom eye, grete ant gode,
Wip browen blysfol under hode¹⁶;
He þat reste him on þe rode¹⁷
þat leflich lyf honoure!

¹ MS. sent² I know³ lady⁴ to behold⁵ worshipful⁶ charming⁷ test, make proof of⁸ noble dwelling (the world?)⁹ knew¹⁰ more enchanting¹¹ lovely¹² forehead¹³ bargain, traffic (?)¹⁴ maiden¹⁵ blithe, gay¹⁶ hood¹⁷ Christ

1-4: refrain to each stanza.

14. fonde: assonance, not rhyme.

Hire lure¹ lumes² liht
 Ase a launterne a³ nyht,
 Hire bleo⁴ blykyeþ⁵ so bryht;
 So feyr heo is ant fyn!
 A suetly⁶ suyre⁷ heo haþ to holde,
 Wiþ armes, shuldre, ase mon wolde,
 Ant fyngres feyre forte folde⁸;
 God wolde hue were myn!

Middel heo haþ menskful⁹ smal;
 Hire loveliche chere¹⁰ as cristal;
 þeges,¹¹ legges, fet, ant al,
 Ywraht¹² is¹³ of þe beste.
 A lussum ledy lasteles¹⁴
 þat sweting is, and ever wes;
 A betere burde never nes
 Yheryed¹⁵ wiþ þe heste.¹⁶

Heo is dereworþe¹⁷ in day,
 Graciouse, stout,¹⁸ and gay,
 Gentil, jolyf¹⁹ so²⁰ þe jay,
 Worhliche²¹ when heo wakeþ.
 Maiden murgest²² of mouþ;
 Bi est, bi west, by norþ and souþ,
 þer nis fi[þ]ele²³ ne crouþ²⁴
 þat²⁵ such murþes makeþ.

1 face
 2 shines
 3 at
 4 hue
 5 gleams
 6 sweet
 7 neck
 8 clasp
 9 delightfully

10 countenance
 11 thighs
 12 fashioned
 13 MS. wes
 14 faultless, perfect
 15 praised
 16 highest
 17 precious

18 stately
 19 lively
 20 as
 21 noble
 22 merriest
 23 fiddle; em. B.
 24 crowd, rote
 25 MS. sat (em. B.)

Heo is coral of godnesse,
 Heo is rubie of ryhtfulnesse,¹
 Heo is cristal of clannesse,²

Ant baner of bealte³;

5

Heo is lilie of largesse,⁴
 Heo is paruenke⁵ of prouesse,
 Heo is selsecle⁶ of suetnesse,
 Ant ledy of lealte.⁷ . . .

For hire love Y carke ant care,
 For hire love Y droupne⁸ ant dare,⁹
 For hire love my blisse is bare,
 Ant al Ich waxe won¹⁰;

For hire love in slep Y slake,¹¹
 For hire love al nyht Ich wake,

15

For hire love mournyng Y make
 More þen eny mon.

LONGING

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 149-50

Wip longyng Y am lad,¹²

On molde¹³ Y waxe mad,

A maide marreþ me;

20

Y grede,¹⁴ Y grone, unglad,

For selden Y am sad¹⁵

þat semly forte se.

Levedi, þou rewe me!

To rouþe¹⁶ þou havest me rad¹⁷;

25

Be bote¹⁸ of pat Y bad,¹⁹

My lyf is long²⁰ on þe.

¹ righteousness

² purity

³ beauty

⁴ generosity

⁵ periwinkle

⁶ heliotrope

⁷ loyalty

⁸ droop

⁹ falter

¹⁰ turn pale

¹¹ grow weak

¹² led

¹³ earth

¹⁴ cry

¹⁵ satiated

¹⁶ sorrow

¹⁷ guided, brought

¹⁸ recompense

¹⁹ (have) endured

²⁰ depends

Levedy of alle londe,
 Les¹ me out of bonde;
 Broht Ich am in wo;
 Have resting² on honde,
 And send³ þou me þi sonde⁴ 5
 Sone, er þou me slo⁵ —
 My reste is wiþ þe ro.⁶
 Þah men to me han onde,⁷
 To love nul y noht wonde,⁸
 Ne lete⁹ for non of þo.¹⁰ 10

Levedi, wiþ al my miht,
 My love is on þe liht,¹¹
 To menske¹² þe when Y may;
 Þou rew and red¹³ me ryht;
 To deþe þou havest me diht,¹⁴ 15
 Y dege longe er my day;
 Þou leve¹⁵ upon mi lay.
 Treuþe Ichave þe plyht,
 To don þat Ich have hyht¹⁶
 Whil mi lif leste may. 20

Lylie-whyht hue¹⁷ is,
 Hire rode¹⁸ so rose on rys¹⁹;
 Þat reveþ²⁰ me mi rest.
 Wymmon war²¹ and wys,
 Of prude²² hue bereþ þe pris, 25
 Burde on of þe best.
 Þis wommon woneþ by west,

1 loose
 2 relief, assuagement
 3 MS. sent
 4 message
 5 slay
 6 roe (a type of restlessness;
 cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 4. 69 ff.)
 7 jealousy

8 will I not cease
 9 leave off
 10 them
 11 alighted
 12 honor
 13 guide
 14 appointed
 15 believe (imp.)

16 promised
 17 she
 18 complexion
 19 spray
 20 deprives
 21 prudent
 22 splendor

Brihtest under bys¹;
 Hevene Y tolde² al his
 þat o³ nyht were hire gest.⁴

NOW WOULD I FAIN

About 1445. Our text is on the basis of MS. Camb. Univ. Lib. Ff. 1.6, 'written about the time of Hen. VI,' with emendations from MS. Bodl. Ashm. 191, but with spellings conformed to the Cambridge manuscript. The latter is reproduced from Halliwell's print in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ* 1.25; Ashmole 191 is printed in Stainer and Nicholson, *Early Bodleian Music* 2.66 (facsimile in Vol. 1, Pl. XXX).

Now wold I fayne some myrthis make
 All oneli for my ladys sake,
 When I hir se⁵;
 But now I am so ferre from hir,
 Hit will nat be.

Thogh I be long out of hir⁶ sight,
 I am hir⁶ man both day and night,
 And so will be;
 Wherfor wold God as I love hir
 That she lovid me!

When she is mery, then am I glad;
 When she is sory, then⁷ am I sad;
 And cause whi—
 For he livith nat that lovith hir
 So⁸ well as I.

She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten
 That 'seldyn seen is soon foryeten⁹';
 Hit is nat so;
 For, in good feith, save oneli hir,
 I love no moo.

¹ byssus, fine linen

² should consider

³ one

⁴ guest

⁵ MS. and hit wold be (Ashm.)

⁶ MS. your (Ashm.)

⁷ MS. than

⁸ MS. as (Ashm.)

⁹ forgot 425 23

Wherfor I pray, both night and day,
 That she may cast [all]¹ care away,
 And leve² in rest;
 And evermore, wherever³ she be,
 To love me⁴ best;

5

And I to hir for to be trew,
 And never chaung[e] her for no⁵ new
 Unto myne end;
 And that I may in hir servise
 For evyr amend.⁶

10

CHAUCER, MERCILESS BEAUTY

The first of a sequence of three roundels. From MS. Camb. Magd. Coll. Pepys 2006. See Skeat, *Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* 1.80-1, 387; Hammond, *Chaucer*, pp. 436-7.

*Youre yën two⁷ woole sle me sodenly,
 I may the Beaute of them not sustene,
 So wondeth⁸ it thorowout my herte kene.*

And but your word wille helen hastily
 Mi hertis wound[e],⁹ while that it is grene,
*Youre yën two wolfe sle me sodenly,
 I may the Beaute of them not sustene.*

15

Upon my trouth I sey yow feithfully
 That ye ben of my liffe and deth the quene;
 For with my deth the trouth shal be [y]sene.¹⁰
*Youre yën two wolfe sle me sodenly,
 I may the Beaute of them not sustene,
 So wondeth it thorowout my herte kene.*

20

1 (Ashm.)

2 live

3 MS. whersoever (Ashm.)

4 MS. hir (Ashm.)

5 MS. noon (Ashm.)

6 improve

7 MS. two yen (em. S.)

8 wounds

9 em. S.

10 Morris (*Aldine Chaucer*),
isene

DEBATE OF THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 172-3. Cf. below, p. 476

' My dep Y love, my lyf Ich hate,
 For a levedy shene¹;
 Heo is briht² so³ daies liht,
 þat is on me wel sene.
 5 Al Y falewe⁴ so dop þe lef,
 In somer when hit is grene;
 Ʒef⁵ mi þoht⁶ helpeþ me noht,
 To wham shal Y me mene⁷?

Sorewe and syke⁸ and drery mod⁹
 10 Byndeþ me so faste
 þat Y wene to walke wod,¹⁰
 Ʒef hit me lengore laste;
 My serewe, my care, al wiþ a word
 He¹¹ myhte away caste;
 15 Whet helpeþ þe, my suete lemmon,
 My lyf þus forte gaste¹²?'

' Do wey, þou clerc, þou art a fol,
 Wiþ þe bydde¹³ Y noht chyde;
 Shalt þou never lyve þat day
 20 Mi love þat þou shalt byde.¹⁴
 Ʒef þou in my boure art take,
 Shame þe may bityde;
 þe is bettere on fote gon
 þen wycked hors to ryde.'

¹ fair

² MS. brith (em. B.)

³ as

⁴ wither, fade

⁵ if

⁶ pondering

⁷ bemoan myself

⁸ sighing

⁹ temper, state of mind

¹⁰ insane

¹¹ she

¹² ruin

¹³ must

¹⁴ experience

'Weylawei! whi seist þou so?

þou rewe on me, þy man;

þou art ever in my þoht

In londe wher Ich am.

Ȝef Y dege for þi love,

Hit is þe mykel sham;

þou lete me lyve, and be þi luef,

And þou my suete lemman.'

'Be stille, þou fol — Y calle þe riht¹!

Co[n]st þou never blynne²?

þou art wayted³ day and nyht

Wip⁴ fader and al my kynne;

Be þou in mi bour ytake,

Lete þey⁵ for no synne⁶

Me to holde, and þe to slou⁷;

þe deþ so þou maht⁸ wynne!'

'Sute lady, þou wend⁹ þi mod;

Sorewe þou wolt me kype¹⁰;

Ich am al so¹¹ sory¹² mon,

So Ich was whylen¹³ blyþe —

In a wyndou þer¹⁴ we stod,

We custe us¹⁵ fyfty syþe.¹⁶

Feir biheste¹⁷ makeþ mony mon

Al is¹⁸ serewes mythe.¹⁹'

'Weylawey! whi seist þou so?

Mi serewe þou makest newe;

Y lovede a clerk al paramours²⁰ —

Of love he wes ful trewe;

1 MS. riȝt (em. B.)

2 stop

3 watched, spied upon

4 by

5 they will fail not

6 because of any sin involved

7 slay

8 mayst

9 change

10 show, inflict upon

11 just as

12 unhappy

13 formerly

14 where

15 kissed each other

16 times

17 promise

18 his

19 lose

20 passionately

LYRICS

He nes nout blyþe never a day
 Bote¹ he me sone² seze³;
 Ich lovede him betere þen my lyf—
 Whet bote⁴ is hit to leze⁶?

‘Whil Y wes a clerc in scole,
 Wel muchel Y couþe⁶ of lore⁷;
 Ych have þoled⁸ for þy love
 Woundes fele⁹ sore,
 Fer from [hom],¹⁰ and eke from men
 Under þe wode hore¹¹;
 Suete ledy, þou rewe of me,
 Nou may¹² Y no more.’

‘þou semest wel to ben a clerc,
 For þou spekest so stille¹³;
 Shalt þou never for mi love
 Woundes þole grylle¹⁴;
 Fader, moder, and al my kun
 Ne shal me holde so stille
 þat Y nam¹⁵ þyn, and þou art myn,
 To don al þi wille.’

CHAUCER, BALLADE

From the *Legend of Good Women*, Prologue B, lines 249–64

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte¹⁶ tresses clere;
 Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al adoun;
 Hyd, Jonathas,¹⁷ al thy frendly manere;
 Penelopee, and Marcia¹⁸ Catoun,
 Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;

¹ unless
² soon
³ saw
⁴ good
⁵ lie
⁶ knew
⁷ learning

⁸ suffered
⁹ very
¹⁰ em. Wright (*Spec. Lyr.*
Poetry, p. 91)
¹¹ hoary; MS. gore
¹² can
¹³ gently

¹⁴ cruel
¹⁵ am not
¹⁶ golden
¹⁷ Cf. 1 Sam. 19. 2
¹⁸ daughter of Cato of U

Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.¹

Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne²; and thou, Lucesse of Rome toun,
And Polixene,³ that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe,⁴ that hast of love swich peyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Herro,⁵ Dido, Laudomia,⁶ alle yfere,⁷
And Phyllis,⁸ hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace,⁹ espyed by thy chere,¹⁰
Ysiphile,¹¹ betrayed with¹² Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre¹³ or Adriane,¹⁴ ye tweyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

MINOT, EDWARD THE THIRD'S FIRST INVASION OF FRANCE

Laurence Minot (fl. 1333-1352) is a writer of whom virtually nothing is known except that he produced a series of eleven poems, of which this is No. 4. Herford has thus characterized him (*Dict. Nat. Biog.* 38. 47): 'While Minot has no great literary value, and gives almost no new information, he embodies in a most vivid way the militant England of his day. He has but one subject, the triumph of England and the English king over French and Scots. The class-divisions among Englishmen are for him wholly merged in the unity of England; himself probably of Norman origin, his habitual language is the strongest and homeliest Saxon. His verse is throughout inspired by savage triumph in the national successes. He has no elegiac or tender note.' Cf. Hall's edition, pp. xii-xiii; Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 322-4.

¹ overshadow, eclipse

² Lavinia; cf. Virgil, *Æn.* 6. 764 ff., etc.

³ daughter of Priam; cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13. 439 ff.

⁴ Thisbe; cf. Ovid, *Met.*

4. 55-166

⁵ Hero; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 18, 19

⁶ Laodamia; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 13

⁷ together

⁸ Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 2

⁹ Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 11

¹⁰ countenance

¹¹ Hypsipyle, first wife of Jason;

see her legend in Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*

¹² betrayed by

¹³ Hypermnestra; cf. Ovid, *Her.* 14

¹⁴ Ariadne; see Chaucer, *Leg. Good Women*

Our poem celebrates the fact that, Edward III and Philip of France having offered each other battle, Edward drew up his troops near La Flamengerie in northern France, on Saturday, Oct. 23, 1339, and waited for Philip to arrive, who, however, retreated from his position, five or six miles away, leaving behind him a thousand horses in a marsh (Hall, p. 54; cf. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* 17. 55).

The poem here printed is from Joseph Hall's edition (Oxford, 1887).

Edward, oure cumly king,
In Braband has his woning,
With mani cumly knight;
And in pat land, trewly to tell,
Ordanis he still for to dwell,
To¹ time he think to fight.

Now God, pat es of mightes maste,
Grant him grace of þe Haly Gaste
His heritage to win!
And Mari moder, of mercy fre,
Save oure king and his men²
Fro sorow, and schame, and syn!

þus in Braband has he bene —
Whare he bifore was seldom sene —
For to prove³ paire japes;
Now no langer wil he spare,
Bot unto Fraunce fast will he fare,
To confort him with grapes.⁴

Furth⁵ he ferd into France;
God save him for mischance,
And all his cumpany!
þe nobill duc of Braband
With him went into pat land,
Redy to lif or dy.

¹ until the
² retainers

³ make trial of

⁴ Cf. Cant. 2. 5.

⁵ MS. ff.

þan þe riche flourde de lice¹
 Wan þare ful litill prise²; —
 Fast he³ fled for ferde.⁴
 þe right aire⁵ of þat cuntre
 Es cumen, with all his knightes fre,
 To schac him by þe berd.

5

Sir Philip þe Valayse,⁶
 Wit his men in þo dayes,
 To batale had he thocht:
 He bad his men þam purvay⁷
 Withowten lenger delay;
 Bot he ne held it noght.

10

He broght folk ful grete wone,⁸
 Ay sevyn oganis one,
 þat ful wele wapnid were;
 Bot sone, whe[n] he herd ascry⁹
 þat King Edward was nere þarby,
 þan durst he noght cum nere.

15

In þat morni[n]g fell a myst,
 And when oure I[n]gliss men it wist,
 It changed all þaire chere;
 Oure king unto God made his bone,¹⁰
 And God sent him gude confort sone —
 þe weder wex ful clere.

20

Oure king and his men held þe felde
 Stalwortly, with spere and schelde,
 And thocht to win his right,
 With lordes, and with knightes kene,
 And oþer doghty men bydene,¹¹
 þat war ful frek¹² to fight.

25

30

¹ *fleur de lis*
² glory
³ Philip VI of France
⁴ fear

⁵ heir (i.e. Edward)
⁶ de Valois (the king)
⁷ make ready
⁸ plenty

⁹ report (by spies)
¹⁰ prayer
¹¹ together
¹² eager

LYRICS

When Sir Philip of France herd tell
 þat King Edward in feld wald dwell,
 þan gayned¹ him no gle;
 He traisted of² no better boȝe.³
 5 Bot both on hors and on fote
 He hasted him to fle.

It semid he was ferd for strokes
 When he did fell his grete okes
 About his pavilyounē;
 10 Abated was þan all his pride,
 For langer þare durst he noght bide,
 His bost was broght all dounē.

þe king of Berne⁴ had cares cokle,
 þat was ful⁵ hardy and bolde
 15 A stede to amstride.⁶
 [He and]⁷ þe king als⁸ o: Naverne⁹
 War fain for ferd¹⁰ in þe ferne¹¹
 þaire heviddes¹² for to hide.

And leves¹³ wele — it es no lye ---
 20 þe felde hat¹⁴ Flemangrye¹⁵
 þat King Edward was in,
 With princes þat war stif ande bolde,
 And dukes þat war doghty tolde,¹⁶
 In batayle to bigin.

þe princes þat war riche¹⁷ on raw,¹⁸
 25 Gert¹⁹ nakers²⁰ strike, and trumps blaw,
 And made mirth at þaire might;

¹ availed

² expected

³ resource

⁴ Bohemia

⁵ MS. fur (em. Ritson)

⁶ bestride

⁷ em. R.

⁸ also

⁹ Navarre (father-in-law of Philip)

¹⁰ MS. faire feld (em. Hall, with fered for ferd)

¹¹ were glad, for fear, in the fern

¹² heads

¹³ believe (imp.)

¹⁴ was called

¹⁵ MS. ff-

¹⁶ considered

¹⁷ splendid

¹⁸ row (line of battle)

¹⁹ caused

²⁰ kettle-drums

Both alblast¹ and many a bow
 War redy railed² opon a row,
 And ful frek for to fight.

Gladly þai gaf mete and drink,
 So þat þai suld þe better swink³ —
 Þe wight⁴ men þat þar ware.
 Sir Philip of Fraunce fled for dout,⁵
 And hied⁶ him hame with all his rout;
 Coward, God giff him care⁷!

For þare þan had þe lely flowre⁸
 Lorn all halely⁹ his honowre,
 Þat sogat¹⁰ fled for ferd;
 Bot oure King Edward come ful still,
 When þat he trowed¹¹ no harm him till,¹²
 And keped¹³ him in þe berde.¹⁴

THE DEATH OF EDWARD III

From a poem (written in 1377) in MS. Brit. Mus. Addit. 22,283. Our extract is from Wright's *Political Poems and Songs* (Rolls Series) 1. 216-7, and comprises lines 17-80.

Sum tyme an Englis schip we had,
 Nobel hit was, and heiþ of tour¹⁵;
 Thorw al Christendam hit was drad,¹⁶
 And stif wold stonde in uch a stour,¹⁷
 And best dorst byde a scharp schour,¹⁸
 And other stormes smale and grete;
 Nou is that schip, that bar the flour,
 Selden seiþe¹⁹ and sone forþete.

1 arblast, crossbow
 2 set in order
 3 toil
 4 stout
 5 fear
 6 hastened
 7 distress

8 See 423 1
 9 wholly
 10 thus
 11 looked for
 12 to himself
 13 seized
 14 beard

15 tower
 16 feared
 17 every battle
 18 tempest
 19 seen

LYRICS

Into that schip ther longeth a roothur,¹

That steered the schip, and governed hit;

In al this world nis such anothur,

As me thenketh in my wit.

Whil schip and rothur togeder was knit,

Thei dredde nother tempest, druȝte,² nor wete,

Nou be thei bothe in synder flit,³

That selden seige is sone forȝete.

Scharpe wawes⁴ that schip has sayled,

And sayed⁵ alle sees⁶ at aventur;

For wynt⁷ ne wederes⁸ never hit sayled,

Wil⁹ the roothur miht enduir.¹⁰

Thouȝ the see were rouȝ, or elles dinuuir,¹¹

Gode havenes that schip wold geete.¹²

Nou is that schip, I am wel suir,¹³

Selde iseye and sone forȝete.

This good schip I may remene¹⁴

To the chivalrye of this londe;

Sum tyme thei counted nouȝt a bene¹⁵

Be¹⁶ al Fraunce, Ich undersonde.

Thei toke and sloug hem with her wonde¹⁷ —

The power of Fraunce, bothe¹⁸ smale and grete;

And brouȝt the kyng hider to byde her bonde¹⁹;

And nou riht sone hit is forȝete.

That schip hadde a ful siker²⁰ mast,

And a sayl strong and large,

That made the gode schip never agast

To undertake a thinge of charge.²¹

And to that schip ther longed²² a barge,

1 rudder

2 drought

3 removed asunder

4 waves

5 braved

6 seas

7 wind

8 storms

9 while

10 endure

11 calm

12 attain

13 sure

14 compare

15 bean

16 by; MS. beo

17 rod, scei

18 MS. bet

19 fetters

20 secure

21 moment

22 belonged

Of al Fraunce gaf¹ nougt a cleete.²
 To us hit was a siker targe³;
 And now riht clene hit is forgete.

The rother was nouthur ok ne elm,
 Hit was Edward the Thridde, the noble kنيht;
 The prince his sone bar up his helm,
 That never scoumfited⁴ was in fiht.
 The kyng him rod and rowed⁵ ariht,
 The prince dredde nouthur stok nor streete.⁶
 Nou of hem we lete ful liht⁷;
 That selden is seige is sone forgete.

The swifte barge was Duk Henri,⁸
 That noble kنيht and wel assayed;
 And in his leggaunce⁹ worthily
 He abod mony a bitter brayd¹⁰;
 Ȝif that his enemys ouȝt outrayed,¹¹
 To chasteis hem wolde he not lete.¹²
 Nou is that lord ful lowe ileyd;
 That selde is seige is sone forgete.

This gode comunes,¹³ bi the rode,
 I likne hem to the schipes mast;
 That with heore catel¹⁴ and with heore goode¹⁵
 Mayntened the werre¹⁶ both furst and last.
 The wynd that bleuz the schip with blast,
 Hit was gode pregeres, I sey hit atrete¹⁷;
 Nou is devoutnes out icast,
 And mony gode dedes ben clene forgete. . . .

¹ cared² cleat³ shield⁴ discomfited⁵ rode and rowed⁶ street (for rhyme, instead
of 'stok nor ston')⁷ make little account⁸ Henry of Lancaster (d. 1361)⁹ allegiance¹⁰ stroke¹¹ inflicted any injuries¹² refrain¹³ commons¹⁴ property¹⁵ goods¹⁶ war¹⁷ distinctly

CHAUCER, COMPLAINT TO HIS EMPTY PURSE

To you, my purse, and to non other wight¹

Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere;

I am so sory, now that ye be light,

That certes, but² ye make me hevy chere,

Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere;

For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye:

Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot³ I dye!

Now voucheth sauf⁴ this day, or⁵ hit be night,

That I of you the blisful soun⁶ may here,

Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,

That of yelownesse⁷ hadde never pere.⁸

Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,⁹

Quene of comfort and of good companye.

Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be¹⁰ to me my lyves¹¹ light,

And saveour,¹² as down in this worlde here,

Out of this tounne help me through your might,

Sin¹³ that ye wole nat been my tresorere;

For I am shave¹⁴ as nye¹⁵ as any frere.

But yit I pray unto your curtesye,

Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

¹ creature

² unless

³ must

⁴ vouchsafe

⁵ ere

⁶ sound

⁷ referring to gold

⁸ equal

⁹ guide

¹⁰ are

¹¹ life's

¹² saviour

¹³ since

¹⁴ shaved

¹⁵ close

I HAVE A GENTLE COCK

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Pickering, London, 1836). See 199 *as fl.*

I have a gentil cok¹
 Crowyt[h] me day²;
 He doth³ me rysyn erly,
 My matynis for to say.

I have a gentil cok¹;
 Comyn he is of gret⁴;
 His comb is of reed corel,
 His tayl⁵ is of get.⁶

I have a gentil cok¹;
 Comyn he is of kynde⁷;
 His comb is of reed corel,⁸
 His tayl is of inde.⁹

His leggs ben of asour.
 So gentil and so smale;
 His spors arn of sylver quy¹⁰
 Into the wortewale.¹¹

His cynyn arn of cristal,
 Lokyn¹² al in aumbyr;
 And every nyȝt he perchit[h] hym
 In myn ladyis chaumbyr.

¹ MS. cook

² announces day to me by his
 crowing

³ makes

⁴ great (lineage)

⁵ MS. tayil

⁶ jet

⁷ he is true to his breed

⁸ MS. scorel

⁹ indigo

¹⁰ white

¹¹ quick (*lit.* root)

¹² enclosed

BACHELOR'S SONG

About 1460-1490. From MS. Bodl. Eng. Poet. c. 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc. 23), p. 27.

*A, a, a, o,*¹

Yet I love wherso I go.

In all this world [n]is a meryar life
 Than is a gong man withoutyn a wyfe;
 5 For he may lyven withouten stryfe,
 In every place wherso he go.

In every place he is loved over all
 Among maydyns gret and small,
 In dauncing, in pypyng, and rennyng at the ball,
 10 In every place wherso he go.

Thei lat lygt² be husbondmen,³
 Whan thei at the balle ren⁴;
 They cast hyr love to gong[e] men
 In every place wherso he go.

15 Than sey maydens: 'Farwell, Jack⁵!
 Thi love is pressyd al in thi pa[c]k⁶;
 Thou beryst thi love behynd thi back,'
 In every place wherso he go.

¹ MS. a
² easily

³ married men
⁴ MS. rene

⁵ MS. Jacke
⁶ MS. pake

CHAUCER, TRUTH

Fle fro the pres,¹ and dwelle with sothfastnesse;²
 Suffise³ thin owene thing, thogh it be smal;
 For hord⁴ hath hate, and clymbyng tykelnesse;⁵
 Prees⁶ hath envye, and wele⁷ blent⁸ overal⁹;
 Savoure¹⁰ no more thanne the byhove¹¹ shal;
 Reule weel thiself, that other folk canst reede,¹²
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.¹³

Tempest¹⁴ the¹⁵ noght al croked to redresse,
 In trust of hire¹⁶ that turneth as a bal;
 Greet reste stant in litel besynesse,¹⁷
 Bywar therefore to spurne agayn an al¹⁸;
 Strive not as doth the crokke¹⁹ with the wal.
 Daunte²⁰ thiself, that dauntest otheres dede,
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.

That the is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,²¹
 The wrastlyng for²² this worlde axeth²³ a fal;
 Her is non hom,²⁴ her nys but wyldernesse.
 Forth, pylgrym, forth! Forth, beste, out of thi stal!
 Know thi contre, loke up, thank God of al!
 Hold the hye weye, and lat thi gost²⁵ the lede,
 And trouthe the shal delyvere — it is no drede.

¹ crowd² truth³ subj.⁴ hoarding⁵ instability⁶ the throng of courtiers⁷ prosperity⁸ blinds⁹ everywhere¹⁰ relish, care for¹¹ suit, fit¹² direct¹³ there is no fear¹⁴ torment¹⁵ thyself¹⁶ Fortune¹⁷ fuss, worry (cf. Isa. 30. 15)¹⁸ awl (cf. Acts 9. 5)¹⁹ crock, earthen pot²⁰ conquer²¹ submission²² to obtain²³ calls for, invites²⁴ Cf. Heb. 11. 9, 10; 13. 14²⁵ spirit

LYRICS

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

About 1275. From MS. Bodl. Digby 86, as printed by Furnivall, *Minor Poems of the Vernier MS., Part II* (E.E.T.S. 117), pp. 761 ff. (ten stanzas in all); cf. the somewhat different version in Böddeker, *Altengl. Dicht.*, pp. 229-30, which has suggested two or three emendations.

The keynote is struck by Boethius (Book 2, Metre 7):

Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent,
Quid Brutus aut rigidus Cato?

These lines are expanded in translation by King Alfred: 'Where now are the bones of the famous and wise goldsmith, Weland?' etc. One of the most famous variations on the theme is by Villon (1461), the first of whose stanzas runs:

Dictes moy où, n'en quel pays,
Est Flora, la belle Romainne:
Archipiada, ne Thais,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine:
Echo, parlant quant bruy: en raine
Dessus riviere ou sus estan,
Qui beaulté ot trop plus qu'humaine?
— Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!

This is translated by Payne as follows:

Tell me, where, in what land of shade,
Hides fair Flora of Rome? and where
Are Thais and Archiapade,
Cousins german in beauty rare?
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
That when one calls by river flow,
Or marish, answers out of the air?
— But what has become of last year's snow?

The last four lines are thus translated in Rossetti's version:

Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,
She whose beauty was more than human?
— But where are the snows of yester-year?

See also below, p. 434; Wells, *Manual*, p. 824 (30).

Were beþ þey [pat]¹ biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,
And hadden feld and wode?

þe riche levedies in hoere bour,
 þat wereden gold in hoere tressour,¹
 Wip hoere brigtte rode²?

[[þey]³ eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;
 Hoere lif was al wip gamen ilad⁴;
 Men kneleden⁵ hem biforen;
 þey beren hem wel swipe heye⁶;
 And, in a twinkling of an eye,
 Hoere soules weren forloren.

Were is þat lawing⁷ and that song,
 þat trayling and that proude zong,⁸
 þo havekes and þo houndes?
 Al þat joye is went away,
 þat wele is comen to 'Weylaway!' —
 To manie harde stoundes.⁹

Hoere paradis þey¹⁰ nomen¹¹ here,
 And nou þey lien in helle ifere¹²;
 þe fuir hit brennes hevere.
 Long is ay,¹³ and long is o,¹⁴
 Long is wy,¹⁵ and long is wo¹⁶;
 þennes ne comþ þey nevere.

THOMAS OF HALES, LOVE-SONG

Thomas of Hales was a Franciscan friar, who wrote this 'love-ron' of 210 lines at the request of a young nun, in the reign of Henry III (probably before 1240, according to *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* 1. 258; soon after 1244, according to Morris, *Old Eng. Misc.*, p. xi; about 1272, *N. E. D.*). The extract below is from the MS. of Jesus College, Oxford (lines 65-120), as reproduced in *Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 49), pp. 93-9. A translation of thirteen stanzas,

¹ braids, tresses² complexion³ Cf. B.⁴ led⁵ MS. kneleden⁶ very exceedingly high⁷ laughing⁸ gait, carriage⁹ experiences¹⁰ MS. by¹¹ took¹² side by side¹³ ever¹⁴ always; MS. ho¹⁵ alas¹⁶ woe

including the first five printed here, may be found in Ten Brink, *Early Eng. Lit.*, pp. 208-11. He says: 'We have here an art-poetry not quite developed in form, of the simplest, noblest mould, a contemplative lyric, which, springing from warm feeling, moves calmly and quietly, without subtlety of reflection or trifling with forms, in euphonious, richly figurative speech.' Another version is in Miss Weston's *Chief Middle English Poets*, pp. 343-5.

Hwer is Paris and Heleyne,
 þat weren so bryht and feyre on bleo¹?
 Amadas and Ideyne,²
 Tristram, Yseude, and alle þeo³?
 5 Ector, wiþ his scharpe meyne,⁴
 And Cesar, riche of wor[l]des feo⁵?
 Heo beoþ iglyden ut of þe reyne,
 So⁶ þe schef⁷ is of þe cleo.⁸

Hit is of heom al so⁹ hit nere.
 10 Of heom me haveþ¹⁰ wunder itold —
 Nere hit reupe¹¹ for to here¹² —
 Hw hi were wiþ pyne¹³ aquold,¹⁴
 And hwat hi poleden¹⁵ alyve¹⁶ here;
 Al is heore hot iturnd to cold.
 15 þus is þes world of false fere¹⁷;
 Fol he is þe on hire is bold.

þeyh he were so riche mon
 As Henry,¹⁸ ure [noble] kyng,

¹ hue
² MS. Dideyne
³ those
⁴ power
⁵ wealth
⁶ as

⁷ sheaf
⁸ brae, steep hillside
⁹ as if
¹⁰ one has, they have
¹¹ were it not pity
¹² MS. heren

¹³ pain
¹⁴ destroyed
¹⁵ endured
¹⁶ in life
¹⁷ appearance, show
¹⁸ Henry III (1216-1272)

3. Amadas: see Schofield, pp. 322, 479. — Ideyne: there is a thirteenth-century OF. romance of Breton origin, *Amadas et Idoine* (ed. Hippéau, Paris, 1863), and allusion is made to the story by Gower (*Conf. Am.* 6. 879) and the *Cursor Mundi* (v. 20), etc.; cf. Gaston Paris, *Litt. Fr. au Moyen Âge*, § 66, and *English Miscellany presented to Dr. Furnivall*, pp. 386 ff. (where there are other references); Schofield, pp. 117, 375.

And al so veyr as Absalon,
 þat nevede on eorþe non evenyng,¹
 Al were sone his prute² agon,³
 Hit nere on ende wrþ on heryng.⁴
 Mayde, if þu wilnest⁵ after leofmon,⁶
 Ich teche þe enne⁷ treowe King.

A! swete, if þu ikn[e]owe⁸
 þe gode þewes⁹ of pisse Childe!
 He is feyr, and bryht on heowe,
 Of glede chere,¹⁰ of mode mylde,
 Of lufsum lost,¹¹ of truste treowe,
 Freo of heorte, of wisdom wilde¹²;
 Ne þurfte¹³ þe never re[o]we,
 Myhtestu do¹⁴ þe in his [h]ylde.¹⁵

He is ricchest Mon of londe,
 So wide so mon speketh wiþ muþ;
 Alle heo beoþ to¹⁶ his honde,
 Est and west, norþ and sup.
 Henri, King of Engelonde,
 Of hym he halt,¹⁷ and to hym buhþ.¹⁸
 Mayde, to þe he send his sonde,¹⁹
 And wilneþ for to beo þe cup.

Ne byt²⁰ he wiþ þe lond ne leode,²¹
 Vough,²² ne gray,²³ ne rencyen.²⁴
 Naveþ he þerto none neode;
 He is riche and wel²⁵ man.

¹ peer; cf. 420 21

² pride

³ vanished.

⁴ herring

⁵ longest

⁶ lover

⁷ a

⁸ knew

⁹ qualities

¹⁰ countenance

¹¹ delight

¹² (?)

¹³ thou wouldst need; MS. þurhte

¹⁴ put

¹⁵ grace

¹⁶ in

¹⁷ holds

¹⁸ bows

¹⁹ message; MS. schonde

²⁰ asks

²¹ people

²² particolored fur

²³ gray fur

²⁴ a kind of cloth

²⁵ wealthy

LYRICS

If þu him woldest lufe heode,¹
 And bycumen his leovemon,
 He brouhte² þe to suche wede,³
 Þat⁴ napeþ king ne kayser non.

5 Hwat⁵ spekestu of eny bolde⁶
 þat wrouhte þe wise Salomon?
 Of jaspe, of saphir, of merede⁷ golde,
 And of mony onoper ston?
 10 Hit is feyrure of feole volde⁸
 More þan Ich eu telle con,
 þis bold, mayde, þe is bihote,⁹
 If þat þu bist his leovemon.

EARTH UPON EARTH

Of this poem there are three versions (A, B, C). A is represented by two poems, B by twenty, and C by one—not to mention a rather anomalous example, difficult to classify. The earliest texts date from about 1310; that printed here is from 1430-1450 (MS. Lambeth 853), and is No. 10 of B. All the known texts have been printed by Miss Hilda Murray, with the necessary apparatus, in *Erthe upon Erthe* (E.E.T.S. 141). The Stratford-on-Avon version was printed by Longfellow in *Outre-Mer*.

The theme is: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return' (Gen. 3. 19).

Erþe out of erþe is wondirly wrougt,
 Erþe of erþe haþ gete¹⁰ a dignyte of nougt,
 15 Erþe upon erþe haþ sett al his pougt,
 How þat erþe upon erþe may be hig¹¹ brougt.

Erþe upon erþe wold he be a king;
 But how erþe schal to erþe þenkþ he noþing:
 Whanne þat erþe biddþ erþe hise rentis hom bring,
 20 þan schal erþe out of erþe have a piteuous parting.

1 offer
 2 would bring
 3 apparel
 4 as

5 why
 6 building
 7 purified
 8 many times

9]
 10]
 11]

Erþe upon erþe wynneþ castels and touris;
 þan seiþ erþe to erþe: 'Now is þis al houris.'
 Whanne erþe upon erþe haþ biggid¹ up hise boures,
 þanne schal erþe upon erþe suffir scharpe schouris.²

Erþe gooth upon erþe as molde upon molde,
 So gooth erþe upon erþe al glitteringe in golde,
 Like as erþe unto erþe nevere go scholde,³
 And git schal erþe unto erthe rapier⁴ þan he wolde.

O þou wrecchid erþe, þat on erþe travelist⁵ nyȝt and day,
 To florische⁶ þe erþe, to peynte þe erþe with wantowne aray,
 Git schal þou, erþe, for al þi erþe, make þou it nevere so queyn
 and gay,
 Out of þis erþe into þe erþe, pere to clinge⁷ as a clot⁸ of clay.

O wrecchid man, whi art þou proud, þat art of þe erþe makid?
 Hider brouȝttist þou no schroud,⁹ but poore come þou and nakid.
 Whanne þi soule is went¹⁰ out, and þi bodi in erþe rakid,
 þan þi bodi þat was rank¹¹ and undevout, of alle men is bihatid.

Out of þis erþe cam to þis erþe þis wrecchid garnement¹²;
 To hide þis erþe, to happe¹³ þis erþe, to him was cloþinge lente;
 Now goop erþe upon erþe, ruli¹⁴ raggid and rent,
 þerfore schal erþe undir þe erþe have hidiose turment.

Whi þat erþe to myche loveþ erþe wondir me pink,
 Or whi þat erþe for superflue erþe to sore sweete¹⁵ wole or swynk¹⁶
 Ffor whanne þat erþe upon erþe is brouȝt withinne þe brink,¹⁷
 þan schal erþe of þe erþe have a rewful stynk.¹⁸

¹ built² trials³ MS. schulde⁴ sooner⁵ laborest⁶ adorn⁷ dry, shrivel up⁸ clod⁹ garment¹⁰ gone¹¹ proud¹² garment (of flesh)¹³ cover¹⁴ ruefully¹⁵ sweat¹⁶ toil¹⁷ of the grave¹⁸ MS. swynk

LYRICS

Lo! erþe upon erþe considere þou may,
 How erþe comeþ into erþe nakid alway,
 Whi schulde erþe upon erþe go now so stoute or gay;
 Whanne erþe schal passe out of erþe in so poore aray?

5 Wolde God perfore þis erþe, while þat he is upon this erþe,
 Upon þis wolde hertili pinke,
 And how þe erþe out of þe erþe schal have his agenrisyng,¹
 And þis erþe for þis erþe schal geelde² streite³ rekenyng;
 Schulde nevere þan þis erþe for þis erþe mysplese hevene King.

10 þerfore, þou erþe upon erþe, þat so wickidli hast wrought,
 While þat þou, erþe, art upon erþe, turne agen þi þought,
 And praie to þat God upon erþe þat al þe erþe haþ wrought,
 þat þou, erþe upon erþe, to blis may be brougt.

O þou Lord þat madist þis erþe for þis erþe, and suffridist
 15 peynes ille,
 Lete nevere þis erþe, for þis erþe, myscheve⁴ ne spille,⁵
 But þat þis erþe on þis erþe be evere worchinge þi wille,
 So þat þis erþe from þis erþe may stie⁶ up to þin hig hille. Am

FILIUS REGIS MORTUUS EST

About 1430. From MS. Lambeth 853, printed by Furnivall in *Politi-
 ligions, and Love Poems* (reprint of E.E.T.S. 15), p. 233. Thirteen stanza

20 As resoun rewlid my rechelees⁷ mynde,
 Bi wiede⁸ waies as Y hadde went,
 A solempne citee me fortunèd to fynde;
 To turne þerto was myne entent.
 A maiden Y mette, a modir hynde,⁹
 Sobbinge and sizynge, sche was neer schent¹⁰;

¹ resurrection; MS. -risynge

² yield

³ strict

⁴ come to grief

⁵ perish

⁶ ascend

⁷ reckless; MS. riche-

⁸ wild

⁹ gr

¹⁰ pr

Sche wepte, sche wailid, so sore sche pined;
 Hir heer, hir face, sche tuggid and rent:
 Sche tuggid, sche taar with greet turment,
 Sche racide¹ hir skyn, bothe body and brest;
 Sche seide þeise wordis evere as sche went:

5

Filius Regis mortuus est.

'The Kingis Sone,' sche seide, 'is deed,
 Þe joie, þe substaunce of my liif²;
 Þe modir to se hir Sone so blede,
 It kittip³ myn herte as with a knyf.
 My Sone þat Y was woont to fede,
 To lulle, to lappe, with songis riif⁴ —
 Out of his herte his blood to schede
 Makip me, his modir, in myche striif.⁵
 I am boþe maiden, modir, and wiif,
 Sones⁶ have Y no mo to souke my brest;
 I may make sorewe without reliif,
 For *Filius Regis mortuus est.*'

10

15

QUIA AMORE LANGUEO

About 1450-1500. From MS. Camb. Univ. Lib. Hh. 4. 12, printed by Furnivall, *op. cit.*, p. 181. Sixteen stanzas in all. Translation in Weston, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-50.

In the vaile of restles mynd,
 I sowght in mownteyn and in mede,
 Trustyng a treu lofe for to fynd.
 Upon an hyll than toke I hede;
 A voise I herd — and nere⁷ I yede⁸ —
 In gret dolour complaynyng tho:
 'See, dere soule, my sydes blede,
Quia amore langueo.'

20

25

¹ tore
² MS. liife
³ cuts

⁴ rife
⁵ MS. striife
⁶ MS. and sones

⁷ nearer
⁸ approached

Upon thys mownt I fand a tree ;
Undir thys tree a man sittynge ;
From hede to fote wowndyd was he,
Hys hert-blode I saw bledynge ;
5 A semely man to be a kyng,
A graciose face to loke unto.
I askyd hym how he had paynyng,¹
He said : '*Quia amore languo.*'

I am treu love that fals was never :
10 My sistur, mannys soule, I loved hyr thus ;
Bycause I wold on no wyse dissevere,
I left my kyngdome gloriouse ;
I purveyd² hyr a place full precieuse ;
She flytt,³ I folowyd ; I luffed her soo
15 That I suffred thes paynes piteuouse,
Quia amore languo.'

HE BARE HIM UP

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by I
in *Anglia* 26. 175-6 (slightly different in his *Neuenglisches Lesebuch* 1. 142)
p for MS. y. The knight is of course Jesus Christ.

Lully, lulley, lully,⁴ lulley,
þe fawcon hath born my make⁵ away.

20 He bare hym up, he bare hym down,
He bare hym into an orchard browne.

In þat orchard þere was an halle
þat was hangid with purpill and pall.

And in þat hall þere was a bede⁶ ;
Hit was hangid with gold so rede.

¹ distress
² provided

³ fled
⁴ MS. lulley (em. F.)

And yn þat bed þere lythe a knyght,
His wōwndis bledying day and nyght.

By þat bedeside kneleth a may,¹
And she wepeth both nyght and day.

And by þat beddeside þere stondith a ston,
'Corpus Christi' wretyn peron.

THE PEARL

The Pearl is an elegiac poem with allegorical elements, embodying a vision by the author of a maiden closely related to him, who had died at an early age. Disregarding stanza 72 (for which see Osgood's edition, p. xlvi, note 1), the poem falls into 20 sections, each consisting of 5 twelve-line stanzas, concatenated by the recurrence of the last word of a stanza in the first line following. The rhyme-scheme is ababababbcbc. The date is about 1370; the author wrote also *Gawain and the Green Knight* (see above, p. 53), besides two other poems, *Purity* and *Patience*. There is only a single manuscript, Brit. Mus. Cott. Nero A. X + 4 (facsimile in Yale University Library). The best edition is by Osgood (Belles Lettres Series, 1906); to this the student is referred for further information. There are translations by Gollancz (1891), Mitchell (1906), Coulton (1906), Osgood (1907), Jewett (1908), and Weston (in *Romance, Vision, and Satire*, 1912); of these the best is Osgood's, in prose.

Tennyson thus apostrophized the poem in Gollancz's edition:

We lost you — for how long a time! —
True pearl of our poetic prime;
We found you, and you gleam reset
In Britain's lyric coronet.

With reference to the emphasis upon the jeweler's art, we know that from the death of St. Louis (1270) this had surpassed all other industrial arts in France (Labarte, *Inventaire du Mobilier de Charles V*, p. 1).

Our text is taken from Osgood's edition (by the kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. D. C. Heath & Co.), with the substitution, when etymologically indicated, of *z* for the character *ȝ*, which usually denotes palatal *g*, of *and* for *ȝ*, and with the normalization of *u* and *v*; the emendations are those of Osgood's text. Our extracts comprise lines 37–300, 385–420.

To þat spot þat I in speche expoun²
I entred, in þat erber³ grene,

¹ maid² tell of³ lawn

In Augoste, in a hyȝ¹ seysoun,
 Quen corne is corven² wyth crokez³ kene.
 On huyle⁴ þer perle hit trendeled⁵ doun
 Schadowed⁶ þis worteȝ⁷ ful schyre⁸ and schene
 Gilofre,¹⁰ gyngure,¹¹ and gromlyoun,¹²
 And pyonys¹⁸ powdered¹⁴ ay bytwene.
 Ȝif hit watz semly on to sene,
 A fayr refflayr¹⁶ ȝet fro hit flot,¹⁶
 þer wonys¹⁷ þat worpyly,¹⁸ I wot and wene,¹⁹
 My precious perle wythouten spot.

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d,²⁰
 For care ful colde þat to me caȝt²¹;
 A de[r]vely dele²² in my hert denned,²³
 þaȝ resoun sette myselven saȝt.²⁴
 I playned²⁵ my perle þat þer watz spenned²⁶.
 Wyth fyrte skyllez²⁷ þat faste faȝt²⁸;
 þaȝ kynde²⁹ of Kryst me comfort kenned,³⁰
 My wreched wylle in wo ay wraȝte.³¹
 I felle upon þat floury flaȝt,³²
 Suche odour to my hernez³³ schot;
 I slode³⁴ upon a slepyng-slaȝte³⁵ —
 On þat prec[i]os perle wythouten spot.

Fro spot³⁶ my spyryt þer sprang in space,
 My body on balke⁴ þer bod³⁷ in sweven³⁸;

¹ high (in a liturgical sense;
 probably the Assumption
 of the Virgin, August 15)

² mowed
³ sickles
⁴ mound
⁵ rolled
⁶ shaded
⁷ plants
⁸ bright
⁹ fair
¹⁰ gillyflower
¹¹ ginger
¹² gromwell

¹⁸ peonies
¹⁴ scattered thickly
¹⁵ fragrance
¹⁶ flowed
¹⁷ dwells
¹⁸ worshipful one
¹⁹ suppose
²⁰ clasped
²¹ seized on me
²² sudden sorrow
²³ made tumult
²⁴ though reason reconciled
 me
²⁵ bemoaned

²⁶ enclosed
²⁷ frightened reasc
²⁸ contended
²⁹ the nature
³⁰ imparted
³¹ wrought
³² turf
³³ brain
³⁴ sank
³⁵ visitation of sleep
³⁶ forth
³⁷ remained
³⁸ dream

My goste is gon in Godez grace,
 In aventure per¹ mervaylez² meven.³
 I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,⁴
 Bot I knew me keste⁵ per klyfez⁶ cleven⁷;
 Towarde a foreste I bere⁸ þe face,
 Where rych rokkez wer to dyscreven.⁹
 Þe lyȝt of hem myȝt no mon leven,¹⁰
 Þe glemande¹¹ glory þat of hem glent¹²;
 For wern never webbez þat wyȝez weven¹³
 Of half so dere adub[be]mente.¹⁴

Dubbed¹⁵ wern alle þo downez sydez¹⁶
 Wyth crystal klyffez so cler of kynde.¹⁷
 Holte-wodez¹⁸ bryȝt aboute hem bydez¹⁹
 Of bollez²⁰ as blwe²¹ as ble of ynde²²;
 As bornyst sylver þe lef onsydez,²³
 Þat þike con trylle²⁴ on uch a tynde²⁵
 Quen²⁶ glem of glodez²⁷ agaynz hem glydez;
 Wyth schymeryng schene²⁸ ful schrylle²⁹ þay schynde.
 Þe gravayl þat on grounde con grynde³⁰
 Wern precious perlez of Oryente;
 Þe sunnebemez bot blo and blynde³¹
 In respecte of³² þat adubbement.

The adubbemente of þo downez dere
 Garten³³ my goste³⁴ al greffe forȝete;
 So frech flavez³⁵ of frytez³⁶ were
 As fode hit con me fayre refete.³⁷

1 where
 2 marvels
 3 move
 4 was
 5 myself to be set down
 6 cliffs
 7 stand fast
 8 turn
 9 to be descried
 10 believe
 11 resplendent
 12 gleamed
 13 people weave

14 splendid array
 15 arrayed
 16 hillsides
 17 by nature
 18 woods
 19 are
 20 trunks of trees
 21 blue
 22 indigo color
 23 unfolds
 24 did quiver
 25 on each branch
 26 when

27 flashes of light (?)
 28 beautiful shimmering
 29 intensely
 30 did crunch
 31 are but dark and dim
 32 compared to
 33 caused
 34 soul
 35 fresh fragrances
 36 fruits
 37 satisfy, refresh

Fowlez¹ per flowen² in fryth³ in fere,⁴
 Of flaumbande hwez,⁵ bope smale and grete;
 Bot sytole-stryng⁶ and gyternere⁷
 Her reken⁸ myrþe mozt not retrete⁹;
 For, quen þose bryddez her wynggez bete,
 Þay songen wyth a swete asent¹⁰;
 So grac[i]os gle¹¹ couþe no mon gete
 As here and se her adubbenment.¹²

So al watz dubbet on dere asyse¹³;
 Þat fryth per¹⁴ fortwne forth me ferez¹⁵;
 Þe derþe¹⁶ þerof for to devyse
 Nis no wyȝ¹⁷ worþe¹⁸ þat tonge berez.
 I welke¹⁹ ay forth in wely²⁰ wyse;
 No bonk²¹ so byg²² þat did me derez.²³
 Þe fyrrer²⁴ in þe fryth, þe fei[r]er con ryse
 Þe playn, þe plonttez,²⁵ þe spyse,²⁶ þe perez,²⁷
 And rawez²⁸ and randez²⁹ and rych revereze³⁰
 As fyldor³¹ fyn her bonkes brent.³²
 I wan³³ to a wæter by schore þat schereze³⁴;
 Lorde, dere watz hit³⁵ adubbenment!

The dubbemente of þo derworth³⁶ depe³⁷
 Wern bonkez³⁸ bene³⁹ of beryl bryȝt;
 Swangeande⁴⁰ swete þe water con swepe,
 Wyth a rownande⁴¹ rourde⁴² raykande⁴³ aryȝt;

¹ birds² flew³ woodland⁴ together⁵ flaming colors⁶ citole-string⁷ player on the cithern⁸ lively⁹ reproduce¹⁰ harmony¹¹ joy¹² beauty¹³ manner¹⁴ where¹⁵ transports¹⁶ glory¹⁷ person¹⁸ worthy¹⁹ walk²⁰ happy²¹ hill²² difficult²³ as to cause me annoyances²⁴ further²⁵ plants²⁶ spicy shrubs²⁷ pear-trees²⁸ hedges²⁹ borders of streams³⁰ rivers³¹ thread of gold (*Fr. fil d'or*)³² steep³³ made my way³⁴ runs swiftly by³⁵ its³⁶ rare³⁷ deep stream³⁸ banks³⁹ pleasing⁴⁰ rushingly (?)⁴¹ murmuring⁴² voice⁴³ moving forward

In þe founte¹ þer sunden stoner stape²
 As glente³ þurȝ glas þat glewed and gyte⁴
 A[s] strewande stornes⁵ quon strofe⁶ men slope.
 Sturen⁷ in welȝyn in wynter nyȝt;
 For uche a pebble⁸ in pole⁹ þer pyt¹⁰
 Watr emerad, saffer¹¹ oþer gemme gentel¹²
 Þat alle þe loze¹³ lemed of¹⁴ hyȝt,
 So dore watr hit adubbenment.

The dubbenment dore of down¹⁵ and daleȝ,
 Of wod and water and wionk¹⁶ playner.
 Byde¹⁷ in me blys, abated my baleȝ.¹⁸
 Forbidden¹⁹ my stresse²⁰ dystroyed²¹ my payner.
 Down after a strem þat dryȝly²² haleȝ²³
 I bowed in blys. Bredful²⁴ my brayner;
 Þe fytre I folged²⁵ þose floȝ²⁶ valer.
 Þe more strengþe of joye myn herte strayner.
 As fortune fares þer as ho frayner.²⁷
 Wheȝer solace ho sende oþer elles sore²⁸
 Þe wyȝ to wham her wylle ho wayner²⁹
 Hytȝer³⁰ to have ay more and more.

More of weel³¹ watz in þat wyse
 Þen I couȝe telle þaȝ I tom³² hade:
 For ureȝly³³ herte myȝt not suffyse
 To þe tenȝe dole³⁴ of þo gladner glade.³⁵

1 bottom of the stream
 2 glittering
 3 gleam
 4 shimmered
 5 stars streaming with light
 6 secure (?)
 7 glitter
 8 pebble
 9 pool
 10 set
 11 sapphire
 12 precious

13 water
 14 gleamed with
 15 hill
 16 fair
 17 caused to spring up
 18 sorrows
 19 did away with
 20 anguish
 21 destroyed
 22 mightily
 23 flows
 24 fruitful

25 followed
 26 watery
 27 where she desires
 28 sorrow
 29 distresses
 30 suffers
 31 joy
 32 leisure
 33 earthly
 34 part
 35 happy

Forþy¹ I þoȝt þat paradyse
 Watz þer over gayn² þo bonkez brade³;
 I hoped⁴ þe water were a devyse⁵
 Bytwene myrþez⁶ by merez⁷ made;
 Bygonde þe broke,⁸ by slente⁹ oþer slade,¹⁰
 I hope þat mote¹¹ merked¹² wore.
 Bot þe water watz depe, I dorst not wade,
 And ever me longed a[y] more and more.

More and more, and get wel mare,
 Me lyste¹³ to se þe broke bygonde;
 For if hit watz fayr þer I con fare,
 Wel loveloker¹⁴ watz þe fyrre londe.
 Abowte me con I stote¹⁵ and stare,
 To fynde a forþe¹⁶ faste con I fonde¹⁷;
 Bot woþez¹⁸ mo iwysse þer ware,
 þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde;
 And ever me þoȝt I schulde not wonde¹⁹
 For wo þer welez so wynne²⁰ wore.
 þenne nwe note²¹ me com on honde,
 þat meved²² my mynde ay more and more.

More mervayle con my dom²³ adaunt²⁴;
 I seȝ²⁵ bygonde þat myry²⁶ mere
 A crystal clyffe ful relusaunt²⁷;
 Mony ryal²⁸ ray con fro hit rere.²⁹
 At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt,³⁰
 A mayden of menske³¹ ful debonere;

1 wherefore
 2 over against; MS. oþer
 3 broad
 4 supposed
 5 division
 6 pleasure-gardens
 7 boundary-lines
 8 stream
 9 slope
 10 dale

11 city (referring to the New
 Jerusalem)
 12 placed
 13 I yearned
 14 lover
 15 stumble
 16 ford
 17 seek
 18 dangers
 19 hesitate
 20 fair

21 a new matter
 22 stirred
 23 mind
 24 overcome
 25 saw
 26 lovely
 27 reflecting much light
 28 royal
 29 leap
 30 young person (OE. *et*
 31 decorous

Blysnande¹ whyt watz hyr bleaunt² —
 I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere³ —
 As glysnande⁴ golde þat man con schere,⁵
 So schon þat schene⁶ anunder schore.⁷
 On lenghe⁸ I loked to hyr þere,
 Þe lenger I knew hyr more and more.

5

The more I frayste⁹ hyr fayre face,
 Her fygure fyn, quen I had fonte,¹⁰
 Suche gladande¹¹ glory con to me glace¹²
 As lyttel byfore þerto watz wonte.
 To calle hyr lyste¹³ con me enchace,¹⁴
 Bot baysment¹⁵ gef myn hert a brunt¹⁶;
 I seȝ hyr in so strange a place,
 Such a burre¹⁷ myȝt make myn herte blunt.¹⁸
 Þenne verrez¹⁹ ho up her fayre frount,²⁰
 Hyr vysayge whyt as playn yvore,
 Þat stonge myn hert ful stray²¹ atount,²²
 And ever þe lenger, þe more and more.

10

15

More þen me lyste my drede aros;
 I stod ful styлле and dorste not calle,
 Wyth yȝen open and mouth ful clos;
 I stod as hende²³ as hawk in halle.
 I hope²⁴ þat gostly²⁵ watz þat porpose²⁶;
 I dred onende²⁷ quat schulde byfalle —
 Lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos,²⁸
 Er I at steven²⁹ hir moȝt stalle.³⁰

20

25

1 gleaming
 2 tunic (OF. *bliaut*)
 3 erstwhile
 4 glittering
 5 cut
 6 fair one
 7 at the foot of the bank
 8 at a distance
 9 scanned
 10 perceived it

11 causing me to rejoice
 12 glide
 13 the desire
 14 pursue
 15 confusion
 16 blow
 17 shock
 18 stunned
 19 lifts
 20 brow

21 out of the right course
 22 confounded
 23 quiet
 24 suppose
 25 spectral
 26 intent, thing intended
 27 concerning
 28 discerned
 29 with my voice
 30 stop

þat gracios gay¹ wythouten galle,
 So smole, so smal, so seme² slyxt,³
 Rysez up in hir araye ryalle,
 A prec[i]os pyece⁴ in perlez pygt.⁵

5 Perlez pygte of ryal prys⁶
 þere mozt mon by grace haf sene,
 Quen þat frech⁷ as flor-de-lys
 Doun þe bonke con boze⁸ bydene.⁹
 Al blysnande whyt watz hir bleaunt of bys,
 10 Upon¹¹ at sydez, and bounden bene¹²
 Wyth þe myrreste margarys,¹³ at my devyse,¹⁴
 þat ever I sez zet with myn ygen;
 Wyth lappez¹⁵ large, I wot and I wene,
 Dubbed with double perle and dygte,¹⁶
 15 Her cortel¹⁷ of self sute¹⁸ schene,
 Wyth precios perlez al umbepygte.¹⁹

A pygt²⁰ coroune²¹ zet²² wer²³ þat gyrl,
 Of marjorys²⁴ and non oþer ston,
 Hige pynakled of cler quyt perle,
 20 Wyth flurtd²⁵ flowrez perfet²⁶ upon.
 To hed²⁷ hade ho non oþer herle²⁸;
 Her here-leke²⁹ al hyr umbegon.³⁰
 Her semblaunt³¹ sade for doc oþer erle,³²
 Her ble³³ more blaxt³⁴ þen whallez bon³⁵;

¹ radiant one

² modest

³ slight

⁴ creature, thing

⁵ arrayed

⁶ excellence

⁷ sweet one

⁸ did betake herself

⁹ forthwith

¹⁰ fine linen; MS. hir beauniys(?)

(em. Osgood)

¹¹ open

¹² pleasingly

¹³ pearls

¹⁴ in my opinion

¹⁵ loose folds

¹⁶ adorned

¹⁷ kirtle

¹⁸ of the very same fashion

¹⁹ bordered

²⁰ set with jewels

²¹ crown

²² besides

²³ wore

²⁴ figured

²⁵ perfectly wrought

²⁶ on her head

²⁷ fillet; MS. werle

²⁸ locks of hair (?); MS.

here leke

²⁹ encircled

³⁰ countenance

³¹ demure enough to suit

duke or earl

³² complexion

³³ white (bleached)

³⁴ Ivory is called whale's
bone in ME.

As schorne golde schyr¹ her fax² þenne schon,
 On schylderez³ þat leghe⁴ unlapped⁵ lyȝte.⁶
 Her depe colour ȝet wonted⁷ non
 Of precios perle in porfyl⁸ pyȝte.

Pyȝt and poyned⁹ watz uche a hemme,
 At honde, at sydez, at overture,¹⁰
 Wyth whyte perle and non oþer gemme,
 And bornyste quyte watz hyr vesture.
 Bot a wonder perle wythouten wemme¹¹
 In myddez hyr breste watz sette so sure.
 A mannez dom¹² moȝt dryȝly¹³ demme¹⁴
 Er mynde moȝt malte in hit mesure¹⁵;
 I hope no tong moȝt endure¹⁶
 No saverly¹⁷ saghe¹⁸ say of þat syȝt,
 So watz hit clene and cler and pure,
 Þat precios perle þer hit watz pyȝt.

Pyȝt in perle, þat precios py[ec]e
 On wyþer half¹⁹ water com down þe schore;
 No gladder gome²⁰ heþen²¹ into Grece
 Þen I quen ho on brymme wore²²;
 Ho watz me nerre²³ þen aunte or nece;
 My joy forþy watz much þe more.
 Ho p[ro]fered me speche, þat special spece,²⁴
 Enclynande lowe in wommon lore,²⁵
 Cagte of²⁶ her coroun of grete tresore,
 And haylsed²⁷ me wyth a lote lyȝte.²⁸

¹ bright
² hair
³ shoulders
⁴ lay
⁵ unbound
⁶ lightly
⁷ lacked
⁸ embroidered border
⁹ pierced (with open-work design)
¹⁰ opening

¹¹ blemish
¹² judgment
¹³ seriously
¹⁴ be baffled
¹⁵ enter into its measure of excellence
¹⁶ be equal to the task
¹⁷ sweet
¹⁸ recital
¹⁹ on the opposite side of
²⁰ man

²¹ hence
²² was on the brink
²³ closer (*perhaps* dearer)
²⁴ rare being; MS. spyce
²⁵ according to women's etiquette
²⁶ caught off
²⁷ greeted
²⁸ manner blithe

Wel watz me þat ever I watz bore,
To sware¹ þat swete in perlez pyȝte

5 'O perle,' quod I, 'in perlez pyȝt,
Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,²
Regretted³ by myn one,⁴ on nyȝte?
Much longeyng haf I for þe layned,⁵
Syþen into gresse⁶ þou me aglyȝte⁷;
Pensyf, payred,⁸ I am forpayned,⁹
And þou in a lyf of lykyng¹⁰ lyȝte,¹¹
10 In paradys erde,¹² of stryf unstrayned.¹³
What wyrde¹⁴ hatz hyder my juel¹⁵ wayned,¹⁶
And don me in del¹⁷ and gret daunger?
Fro¹⁸ we in twynne¹⁹ wern townen²⁰ and twayne
I haf ben a joylez juelere.'

15 That juel þenne in gemmez gente²¹
Vered²² up her vyse²⁴ wyth yȝen graye,
Set on hyr coroun of perle orient,
And soberly after þenne²⁵ con ho say:
'Sir, ȝe haf your tale mysetente,²⁶
20 To say your perle is al awaye.
Þat is in cofer so comly clente,²⁷
As in þis gardyn gracios²⁸ gaye,
Hereinne to lenge²⁹ for ever and play.
Þer mys nee mornyng³⁰ com never nere³¹;
25 Her were a forser³² for þe, in faye,³¹
If þou were a gentyl jueler.

1 answer

2 lamented

3 grieved for

4 by myself

5 kept silent about

6 the sod (grass)

7 slipped away

8 worn

9 overcome with pain

10 pleasure

11 arrived

12 the country of paradise

13 unmolested

14 fate

15 jewel

16 brought; MS. vayned

17 sorrow; MS. þys del

18 since

19 in twain

20 drawn

21 torn apart

22 precious

23 turned

24 face

25 straightway

26 heeded ill

27 enclosed so beautifully

28 delightful

29 tarry

30 where sin nor mourning?

31 MS. here

32 treasure-chest

33 indeed

Unavysed,² forsope, wern alle pre;
 pou ne woste³ in worlde⁴ quat on dotz mene,⁵
 5 py worde byfore py wytte con fle.
 pou says pou trawez me in jis dene,
 Bycawse pou may wyth ygen me se;
 Anoper pou says, in jys countre
 pysel schal won wyth me rygt here;
 10 pe prydde, to passe jys water fre —
 pat may no joyfol jueler. . . .

'In blysse I se pe blypely blent,⁷
 And I a man al mornyf⁸ mate⁹;
 Ze take peron ful lyttel tente,¹⁰
 15 paz I hente¹¹ ofte harmez hate.¹²
 Bot now I am here in your presente,¹³
 I wolde bysech wythouten debate
 Ze wolde me say in sobre asente¹⁴
 What lyf ze lede erly and late;
 20 For I am ful fayn¹⁵ pat your astate¹⁶
 Is worpen¹⁷ to worschyp and wele, iwysse
 Of alle my joy pe hyge gate,¹⁸
 Hit is in grounde¹⁹ of alle my blysse.'

'Now blysse, burne,²⁰ mot pe bytyde,'
 25 pen sayde pat lufsoum of lyth and lere²¹;
 'And welcum here to walk and byde,
 For now py speche is to me dere;
 Maysterful mod²² and hyge pryde,
 I hete²³ pe, arn heterly²⁴ hated here.

¹ one time
² ill considered
³ knowest not
⁴ at all
⁵ a single one means (*lit.*
 does mean)
⁶ valley
⁷ joyously mingled
⁸ mournful

⁹ dejected
¹⁰ heed
¹¹ experience
¹² burning
¹³ presence
¹⁴ compliance
¹⁵ glad
¹⁶ condition
¹⁷ is turned

¹⁸ road
¹⁹ at the basis
²⁰ sir
²¹ that one, lovely of limb
 and face
²² temper
²³ assure
²⁴ hitte

My Lorde ne lovez not for to chyde,
 For meke am alle þat wonez hym nere;
 And when in hys place þou schal apere,
 Be dep devote¹ in hol² mekenesse;
 My Lorde þe Lamb lovez ay such chere³ —
 þat is þe grounde of alle my blysse.

'A blysful lyf þou says I lede;
 þou woldez know þerof þe stage.⁴
 þow wost wel when þy perle con schède⁵
 I watz ful zong and tender of age;
 Bot my Lorde þe Lombe, þurz hys Godhede,
 He toke myself to hys maryage,
 Corounde me quene in blysse to brede⁶
 In lenghe of dayez þat ever schal wage⁷;
 And sesed in⁸ alle hys herytage
 Hys lef⁹ is, I am holy hysse;
 Hys prese,¹⁰ hys prys,¹¹ and hys parage,¹²
 Is rote and grounde of alle my blysse.'

GODRIC'S HYMNS

It is not for beauty of phrasing or loveliness of movement that these verses are remarkable. They are here printed because they are early (Godric died in 1170); because their author was illiterate; and because he had such a singular career. He was successively peddler, pirate, and palmer, before, at the age of forty or over, he turned to the hermit's life. He is described as broad-shouldered, with well-set, sinewy frame, and flowing beard; and his hair in earlier life was black. Of him, as of Chaucer's shipman, it might be said:

With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.

During his wandering life, he was for several years the master of a vessel plying between England, Scotland, Denmark, and Flanders; journeyed twice to Jerusalem, and on May 29, 1102, carried Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem, to Jaffa in his ship; and visited Rome, St. Giles in Provence, and Compostella. The

¹ deeply devout

² all

³ demeanor

⁴ degree of advancement

⁵ did fall

⁶ dwell

⁷ endure

⁸ put in possession of

⁹ precious one

¹⁰ worth

¹¹ excellence

¹² noble lineage

last sixty years of his life he spent at Finchale, near Durham. He knew a little French, and could read at least the Psalter in Latin. He 'had unique influence over animals. His heifer, the hare that was nibbling at his garden herbs, the frozen birds, the stag pursued by huntsmen, all found a friend in him' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*). In extreme old age he became clairvoyant, and 'would interrupt his conversation to utter prayers for the storm-tossed vessels of his dreams.' See Kingsley, *Hermits*; Alban Butler's and Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*; and especially the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

The music of all three hymns, found in MS. Brit. Mus. Royal S. F. 7, is reproduced as the frontispiece of Saintsbury's *History of English Prose*, with a somewhat imperfect text.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

This hymn was taught, as he believed, to Godric, by the Virgin Mary herself. The text is from Zupitza's edition (*Eng. Stud.* 11. 423). The music to which it was sung is printed in Stevenson's edition of Reginald's life of the saint (Surtees Soc., Vol. 20), p. 288.

Sainte Marie, Virgine,
 Moder Jesu Cristes Nazarene,
 Onfo,¹ scild,² help pin³ Godric,
 Onfang,¹ bring hehlic⁴ wið þe in Godes ric.⁵

5

Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,⁶
 Maidenesc clenhad,⁷ moderesc flur,⁸
 Dilie⁹ mine sinne, rixe¹⁰ in min mod,
 Bring me to winne¹¹ wið self God.

HYMN OF BURGwine, GODRIC'S SISTER

Godric's sister had led a hermit's life in a cell near him at Finchale. After her death he was concerned about the state of her soul. One night he had a vision of the Virgin Mary followed by two men in white garments, and between them the spirit of his sister. They floated down upon the altar of his oratory, and his sister, standing upon the altar, sang the following lines (Zupitza, p. 429).

¹ receive

² protect

³ thy

⁴ gloriously

⁵ kingdom

⁶ bower; chamber (alluding to Ps. 19. 5, understood of Christ as the bridegroom)

⁷ purity

⁸ flower

⁹ blot out

¹⁰ reign

¹¹ bliss

The 'scamel,' or footstool, here refers to the altar, with allusion to 1 Chron. 28. 3; Ps. 99. 5; 132. 7; Isa. 60. 13; for the footstool may be identified with the mercy-seat of the old dispensation (Exod. 25. 16-22), and hence with the altar in the Christian church.

Crist and Seinte Marie swa¹ on scamel me iledde²
 þat Ic on þis erðe ne silde³ wið mine bare fote itredie.⁴

HYMN TO ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas is reported by his biographer, Reginald (ed. Stevenson, p. 202), to have once visited Godric in a dream at Eastertide, in company with angels descending to Christ's sepulchre, to have sung with them, and to have urged Godric to sing also, which he did. Our hymn, however, has no direct allusion to this occurrence.

The third line should, according to Zupitza (p. 430), be brought into direct relation with the end of the first ('God's darling at thy birth, at thy bier') — which indicates that Godric's literary technique left something to be desired.

Sainte Nicholæs, Godes druð,
 Tymbre⁵ us faire scone⁶ hus —
 At þi burth, at þi bare —
 Sainte Nicholæs, bring us wel pare.⁷

5

I SIGH WHEN I SING

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 210-2

I syke⁸ when Y singe,
 For sorewe þat Y se,
 When Y wiþ wypinge⁹
 Biholde upon þe tre,
 Ant se Jesu, þe suete,
 Is¹⁰ herte-blod forlete¹¹
 For þe love of me.
 Ys¹⁰ woundes waxen wete;
 Þei wepen stille and mete¹²;
 Marie rewep þe.

10

15

¹ so
² led
³ should
⁴ tread

⁵ build
⁶ beautiful
⁷ there
⁸ sigh

⁹ weeping
¹⁰ his
¹¹ lose
¹² gently

Ofte when Y sike
 And makie my mon,
 Wel ille þah me like¹
 Wonder is hit non;
 When Y se honge hege, 5
 Ant bittre pynes drege,²
 Jesu, my lemmon.³
 His wondes sore smerte;
 þe spere al to [h]is herte
 Ant pourh [h]is syde [i]s⁴ gon. 10

Ofte when Y syke,
 Wij care Y am þourhsoht⁵;
 When Y wake, Y wyke,⁶
 Of serewe is al mi þoht.
 Alas! men beþ wode⁷ 15
 þat suereþ by þe rode,
 And selleþ him for noht
 þat bohte us out of synne.
 He bring⁸ us to wynne⁹
 þat haþ us duere¹⁰ boht! 20

A SONG TO THE VIRGIN

Thirteenth century. From MS. Brit. Mus. Egerton 613, printed by Morris, *Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S. 49), pp. 194-5.

Of on þat is so fayr and brigȝt
*Velut*¹¹ *maris stella*,
 Brigȝter þan þe dayis ligȝt,
Parens et puella.
 Ic crie to þe; þou se¹² to me; 25
 Levedy, preye þi Sone for me,
Tam pia,

¹ if I like it full ill
² suffer
³ darling
⁴ MS. sydes

⁵ pierced
⁶ grow weak
⁷ demented
⁸ subj.

⁹ bliss
¹⁰ dearly
¹¹ MS. velud
¹² look

Wel he wot¹ he is þi Sone,

Ventre quem portasti;

He wyl nout werne² þe þi bone,³

Parvum quem lactasti;

So hende⁴ and so god he is,⁵

He havet[h] brou[h]t ous to blis

Superni

þat havez hidut⁶ þe foule put⁷

Inferni.

STAND WELL, MOTHER, UNDER ROOD

About 1310. From Bøddeker, pp. 206-8

' Stond wel, moder, under rode,

10

Byhold⁸ þy Sone wiþ glade mode;

Blyþe, moder, myht⁹ þou be!'

' Sone, hou shulde Y blyþe stonde?

Y se þin fet, Y se þin honde,

Nayled to þe harde tre.'

15

' Moder, do wey¹⁰ þy wepinge;

Y þole¹¹ dep for monkynde,

For my gult þole Y non.'

' Sone, Y fele þe dede-stounde¹²;

þe suert is at myn herte grounde¹³

20

þat me byhet¹⁴ Symeon.'

' Moder, merci, let me deye,

For Adam out of helle [to] beye,

Ant his kun, þat is fcllore.'

¹ knows

² deny

³ prayer, boon

⁴ gracious

⁵ MS. his

⁶ covered

⁷ pit

⁸ MS. -holt

⁹ mayst

¹⁰ away

¹¹ suffer

¹² death-pang

¹³ core

¹⁴ foretold

' Sone, what shal me to rede¹?
My peyne pyneþ me to dede²;
Lat me dege þe byfore.'

5 ' Moder, þou rewe al of þi Bern³;
þou wosshe awai þe bloody tern,⁴
Hit dop⁵ me worse þen my ded.'⁶
' Sone, hou may Y teres werne⁶?
Y se þe bloody stremes erne⁷
From þin herte to my fet.'

10 ' Moder, nou Y may þe seye,
Betere is þat Ich one⁸ deye
þen⁹ al monkunde to helle go.'
' Sone, Y se þi bodi bysw[o]ngen,¹⁰
Fet and honde þourhout stongen¹¹;
15 No wonder þah¹² me be wo.'

' Moder, nou Y shal þe telle,
Ȝef Y ne dege, þou gost to helle;
Y pole ded for þine sake.'
20 ' Sone, þou art so meke and mynde,¹³
Ne wyt¹⁴ me naht — hit is my kynde¹⁵ —
þat Y for þe þis sorewe make.'

' Moder, nou þou miht wel leren¹⁶
Whet sorewe haveþ¹⁷ þat children beren,
Whet sorewe hit is wiþ childe gon.'
25 ' Sorewe? ywis,¹⁸ Y con þe telle!
Bote¹⁹ hit be þe pyne²⁰ of helle,
More serewe wot Y non.'

¹ as advice² death³ son⁴ tears⁵ affects⁶ forbid⁷ run⁸ alone⁹ than¹⁰ em. B.¹¹ pierced¹² if¹³ considerate¹⁴ blame¹⁵ nature¹⁶ canst easily explain¹⁷ they have¹⁸ indeed¹⁹ unless²⁰ pain

' Moder, rew of moder-kare,
 For nou þou wost of moder-fare,¹
 þah² þou be clene mayden on.³
 ' Sone, help at alle nede
 Alle þo þat to me grede,⁴
 Maiden, wif, ant fol⁵ wymmon.'

5

' Moder, may Y no lengore duelle,⁶
 þe time is come, Y shal⁷ to helle;
 þe þridde day Y ryse upon.'
 ' Sone, Y wil wiþ þe [be] founden;
 Y deye, ywis, for þine wounden —
 So soreweful ded nes never non.'

10

When he ros, þo⁸ fel hire sorewe,
 Hire blisse sprong þe þridde morewe;
 Blyþe, moder, were þou þo l
 Levedy, for þat ilke blisse,
 Bysech þi Sone of sunnes lisse⁹;
 þou be oure sheld ageyn¹⁰ oure fo.

15

Blessed be þou, ful of blysse l
 Let us never hevene misse,
 þourh þi¹¹ suete Sones myht.
 Loverd, for þat ilke¹² blod
 þat þou sheddest on þe rod,
 þou bryng us into hevene-lyht.

20

¹ mother-doings
² though; MS. þou
³ one, a; MS. mon
⁴ cry

⁵ foolish, loose
⁶ stay
⁷ must
⁸ then

⁹ sin's remission
¹⁰ against
¹¹ MS. sourh þich (em. B.)
¹² same

AS I RODE

About 1310. From Böddeker, pp. 218-9

Ase Y me rod, þis ender¹ day,
 By grene wode to seche play,
 Mid herte Y þohte al on a may,²
 Suetest of alle þinge;
 5 Lype,³ and Ich ou telle may
 Al of þat suete þinge.

Þis maiden is suete ant fre of blod,⁴
 Briht and feyr, of milde mod;
 Alle heo mai don us god
 10 Þurh hire bysechyng;e;
 Of hire he tok fleysch and blod,
 Jesu Crist, hevene Kynge.

Wip al mi lif Y love þat may;
 He is mi solas nyht and day,
 15 My joie, and eke my beste play,⁵
 Ant eke my love-longynge;
 Al þe betere me is þat day
 Þat Ich of hire synge.

Of alle þinge Y love hir mest,⁶
 20 My dayes blis, my nyhtes rest,
 Heo counseileþ and helpeþ best
 Boþe elde and gynge⁷;
 Nou Y may, ȝef Y wole,
 Þe fif joyes mynge.⁸

25 Þe furst joie of þat wymman⁹ —
 When Gabriel from hevene cam,

¹ other
² maid
³ listen

⁴ descent, parentage
⁵ delight
⁶ most

⁷ old and young
⁸ mention
⁹ MS. wyn-

Ant seide God shulde bicomē man,
 Ant of hire be bore,
 And bringe up of helle pyn
 Monkyn¹ þat wes forlore.

þat oþer² joie of þat may 5
 Wes o³ Cristesmasse day,
 When God wes bore, on þorwe⁴ lay,
 Ant brohte us lyhtnesse⁵;
 þestri⁶ wes seie⁷ byfore day,
 þis hirdes⁸ bereþ wytnesse. 10

þe þridde joie of þat levedy —
 þat men clepeþ þe Epyphany,
 When þe kynges come, wery,
 To presente hyre Sone
 Wiþ myrre, gold, and encenz, 15
 þat⁹ wes Mon bicomē.

þe furþe joie we telle mawen —
 On Estermorewe, w[h]en¹⁰ hit gon dawen,¹¹
 Hyre sone, þat wes slawen,
 Aros in fleish and bon; 20
 More joie ne mai me haven
 Wyf ne mayden non.

þe fifte joie of þat wymman —
 When hire body to hevene cam,
 þe soule to þe body nam,¹² 25
 Ase hit wes woned to bene.¹³
 Crist, leve¹⁴ us alle wiþ þat wymman
 þat joie al for te sene.

mankind
 second
 on
 manger
 light

⁶ darkness
⁷ seen
⁸ shepherds
⁹ who
¹⁰ em. B.

¹¹ dawn
¹² joined
¹³ be
¹⁴ grant

Preye we alle to oure hevedy,
 Ant to þe sontes¹ þat woneþ² hire b
 þat heo³ of us haven merci,
 Ant þat we ne misse
 In þis world to ben holy,
 Ant wyne hevene blyse.

WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN OF MARY FREE

About 1456. From MS. Brit. Mus. Harl. 5396, printed by Wright, *Specimens of Old Christmas Carols* (Percy Soc. 4), p. 32.

Christo paremus canticam,
[In] excelsis gloria.

When Cryst was born of Mary fre,⁴
 In Bedlem in that fayre cyte,
 Angellis song ther with myrth and gle:
In excelsis gloria.

Herdmen⁵ beheld thes angellis bryȝt,
 To hem apperyd wyth gret lyȝt,
 And seyð: 'Goddys Sone is born this nyȝt;
In excelsis gloria.'

Thys king⁶ ys comyn to save [man]kynde,
 In the Scriptur⁷ as we fynde;
 Therefore this song have we in mynde:
In excelsis gloria.

Then, Lord, for thy gret[e] grace,
 Graunt us the blys to se thy face,
 Where we may syng to thy solas:
In excelsis gloria.

¹ saints
² dwell
³ they
⁴ noble

⁵ shepherds
⁶ MS. keng (em. Chambers
 and Sidgwick, *Early Eng-
 lish Lyrics*)

⁷ MS. as yn Ser
 C. and S.)

AT CHRISTMAS, MAID MARY

About 1425. Sections 6 and 7 (lines 59-84) of *Festivals of the Church*, from MS. Brit. Mus. Royal 18 A. 10, printed by Morris, *Legends of the Holy Rood* (E.E.T.S. 46), pp. 212-3.

At Cristemasse, mayde Mary,
 þorowe helpe of þe Holy Goostis heste,¹
 þi Brid² was born, and lay þe by,
 Aboute boþe bynne³ and beeste.
 þe aungels maden melody
 For joye of Cristis feeste;
 A clere note þei sang in þe sky
 Whan Kyngis Sone bare fleissly creste.⁴
 Scheperdes, meest and leest,
 'Joye to God full of love!' 10
 Herden þei aungels synge above,
 'Pes to man! þe devyll is drove⁵
 Fro Goddis trone in þe eest.'

þan mygt þe mylde may⁶ synge,
 Ysaye, þe woord of þee: 15
 'þou seydest⁷ a ȝerd schulde sprynge
 Oute of þe rote of jentill Jesse,
 And schulde floure with florisschyng,
 With primeroses greet plente;
 Into þe croppe⁸ schulde come a Kyng 20
 þat is a Lord of power and pyte—
 My swete Sone I see!
 I am þe ȝerde,⁹ þou art þe Flour!
 My Brid¹⁰ is borne by¹¹ beest in boure;
 My Primerose, my Paramour,¹² 25
 With love I lulle þee.'

¹ bidding
² son (*lit.* bird)
³ manger
⁴ crest, insignia

⁵ driven
⁶ maiden
⁷ Isa. 11. 1
⁸ topmost branch

⁹ shoot
¹⁰ child (*lit.* bird)
¹¹ near
¹² sweetheart

I SING OF A MAIDEN

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Fehr in *Herrig's Archiv* 109. 50.

I syng of a mayden
 þat is makeles¹;
 Kyng of alle kynges
 To here Sone [s]che² ches.³
 He cam also⁴ styлле
 þere⁵ his moder was
 As dew⁶ in Aprylle
 þat fallyt on þe gras;
 He cam also styлле
 To his moderes bowr
 As dew in Aprille
 þat fallyt on þe flour;
 He cam also styлле
 þere his moder lay
 As dew in Aprille
 þat fallyt on þe spray;
 Moder and maydyn
 Was never non but [s]che²;
 Wel may swych a lady
 Godes moder be.

LULLAY, MY CHILD

About 1460-1490. From MS. Bodl. Eng. Poet. e. 1, printed by Wright in *Songs and Carols* (Percy Soc. 73), p. 19.

*Lullay, my Child, and wepe no more;
 Slepe, and be now styll;
 The King of blys thy Fader ys,
 As it was hys wyll.*

¹ matchless

² MS. che (em. Chambers and Sidgwick)

³ chose

⁴ as

⁵ where

⁶ Cf. Ps. 72. 6

This endrys¹ nyȝt I saw a syȝt² —

A mayd a cradyll kepe —

And ever she song, and seyde among:

'Lullay, my child, and slepe.'

'I may not slepe, but I may wepe,

I am so wo begone;

Slep I [w]old, butt I am colde,

And clothys have I none.'

Me thouȝt I hard³ the Chyld answard,

And to hys moder he sayd:

'My moder der, what do I her,

In cribbe why am I layd?

I was borne, and layd beforne

Bestys, both ox and asse;

My moder mild, I am thy Child,

But he my Fader was.

Adam's gylt this man had spylt⁴;

That sin grevet[h] me sore.

Man, for the her shall I be

Thyrty wynter and mor.

Dole⁵ is to se, her shall I be

Hang[ed] upon the rode;

With baleis⁶ tobete,⁷ my woundes towete,⁸

And ȝeffe my fleshe to bote.⁹

Here shall I be hanged on a tre,

And dye, as it is skyll¹⁰;

That I have bouȝt leese¹¹ wyll I nouȝt;

It is my Faders will.

¹ other
² MS. syȝth
³ heard
⁴ ruined

⁵ MS. dole it
⁶ scourge
⁷ smitten
⁸ dripping

⁹ atonement
¹⁰ proper, right
¹¹ lose; MS. lesse

1 so scharp shall perse my hert
2 for adys that I have done;
3 of grace, wher¹ thou hase
4 syn thy lytyll Sonne?

5 Withouten pety² her shall aby,³
6 And mak my fleshe all blo.⁴
7 Adam, iwys, this deth it ys
8 For the and many mo.⁵

THE SHEPHERD UPON A HILL HE SAT

About 1500 (or earlier). From MS. Oxford Balliol 354, as printed by Fli
in *Angl.* 26. 243-5 (cf. *Neueng. Lesebuch*, pp. 117-9), with *h* for MS. *j*.
554 24 ff.

9 *Can I not syng but 'Hoy!'*
10 *Whan the joly shepard made so mych joy.*

11 The shepard upon a hill he satt;
12 He had on hym his tabard⁶ and his hat,
13 Hys tarbox, his pype, and hys flagat⁷;
14 Hys name was called Joly, Joly Wat,
15 For he was a gud herdesboy.
16 Ut hoy!
17 For in hys pype he made so mych joy.

18 The shepard upon a hill was layd;
19 Hys doge to hys gyrdyll was tayd.⁸
20 He had not slept but a lytill brayd⁹
21 But⁹ *Gloria in excelsis* was to hym sayd.
22 Ut hoy!
23 For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

1 whether
2 pity
3 expiate
4 livid

5 loose upper garment with-
out sleeves
6 flask, bottle
7 tied

8 while; MS. broyd (em.)
9 when

The shepard [up]on a hill he stode;
 Rownd about hym his shepe they yode.¹
 He put hys hond under hys hode,²
 He saw a star as rede as blod.

Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

' Now farwell, Mall, and also Will,
 For my love go ye all styll
 Unto³ I cum agayn you till⁴;
 And evermore, [W]ill,⁵ ryng well thy bell.

Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

' Now must I go per⁶ Cryst was borne;
 Farewell, I cum agayn to-morn⁷;
 Dog, kepe well my shep fro þe corn,
 And warn well warroke⁸ when I blow my horn.

Ut hoy!

For in hys pipe he made so mych joy.

Whan Wat to Bedlem cum[en] was,
 He swet — he had gon faster than a pace⁹;
 He fownd Jesu in a sympyll place,
 Betwen an ox and an asse.

Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he mad so mych joy.

The shepard sayd anon ryght:
 ' I will go se yon farly¹⁰ syght,
 Wheras þe angell syngith on hight,¹¹
 And the star þat shynyth so bryght.

Ut hoy!

For in [his]¹² pipe he made so mych joy.

¹ went
² hood (to lift it up)
³ until
⁴ to

⁵ em. F.
⁶ where
⁷ to-morrow
⁸ (?)

⁹ walk
¹⁰ wondrous
¹¹ high
¹² em. F.

My skyrte,¹ my tarbox, and my scrype²;
Home to my felowes now will I skype,
And also loke unto my shepe.

Ut hoy!

For³ in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

'Now farewell, myne owne herdesman, Wat!'

'Ye, for God, lady, even so I hat⁴;

Lull well Jesu in thy lape,

And farewell, Joseph, wyth thy rownd cape.

Ut hoy!

For in hys pipe he mad so myche joy.

Now may I well both hope⁶ and syng,

For⁸ I have bene a[t] Crystes beryng⁶;

Home to my felowes now wyll I flyng.⁷

Cryst of hevyn to his blis us bryng!

Ut hoy!

For in his pipe he mad so myche joy.

JUDAS

About 1300 (*New Eng. Dict.* s.v. *plate*). From MS. Camb. Trin. Coll. 14-39 (photograph in my possession); cf. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 23. The manuscript has *y* for *h* and *-st(e)* for *-st(e)*; it is otherwise carelessly written (*wid* for *wib*, *won* for *hou* (?)), etc., but I have made very few emendations, though one is tempted to change *aros* to *aras*, for instance. Mirk (about 1400?) says (*Festial*, E.E.T.S., Ex. Ser. 96, p. 79): 'Judas had befor slayne his owne fadyr, and bylayn hys owne modyr.'

Hit wes upon a Scere þorsday þat ure Loverd aros;

Ful milde were þe wordes he spec to Judas:

¹ (?) ; MS. scrype (em. Flügel)
² scrip; MS. skyrte (em. Flügel)
³ MS. ffor

⁴ am called
⁵ hop

⁶ birth
⁷ rush

19. Scere þorsday: Maundy Thursday; Mirk explains (*Festial*, p. 125): 'In old fadyrs dayes, men wold þat day make scher hom honest, and dodde hor heddis, and clyp hor berdys, and so make hom onest azeynes Astyr-day. For, on the morow, þay wold do hor body non ese, but suffyr penance yn mynd of ym þat suffred so hard for hom'; cf. p. 169.

' Judas, þou most to Jurselem, oure mete for to bugge¹;
þritti platen² of selver þou bere upo þi rugge.³

þou comest fer i⁴ þe brode stret, fer i þe brode strete;
Summe of þine tunesmen þer þou meigt imete.⁵

Imette wid is soster,⁶ þe swikele⁷ wimon.

5

' Judas, þou were wrþe⁸ me⁹ stende¹⁰ þe wid ston,

[Judas, þou were wrþe me stende þe wid ston,]
For þe false prophete þat tou bilevest upon.'

' Be stille, leve soster, þin herte þe tobreke¹¹!

Wiste¹² min Loverd,¹³ Crist, ful wel he wolde be wreke.¹⁴

10

' Judas, go þou on þe roc, heie upon þe ston;
Lei þin heved i my barm,¹⁵ slep þou þe anon.'

Sone so¹⁶ Judas of slepe was awake,
þritti platen of selver from hym weren itake.

He drou¹⁷ hymselfe bi þe cop,¹⁸ þat al [h]it lavede¹⁹ a²⁰ blode; 15
þe Jewes out of Jurselem awenden²¹ he were wode.

Foret²² hym com þe riche Jeu þat heigte²³ Pilatus.

' Wolte sulle²⁴ þi Loverd, þat hette²⁵ Jesus? '

' I nul²⁶ sulle my Loverd for nones cunnes eigte,²⁷

Bote hit be for þe þritti platen þat he me bitaigte.²⁸

20

1 buy
2 Wyclif has "plates," Matt.
26. 15, etc.

3 back
4 in
5 meet
6 sister
7 treacherous
8 deserving
9 (that) one

10 stoned
11 break, subj.
12 if . . . knew (it)
13 lord
14 avenged
15 lap
16 as soon as
17 drew
18 head
19 was bathed

20 in
21 thought
22 forth
23 was called
24 wilt thou sell
25 is called
26 will not
27 no kind of property
28 entrusted

' Wolte sulle þi Lord, Crist, for enes cunnes golde? '
' Nay, bote hit be for þe platen þat he habben wolde.'

In him ¹ com ur Lord gon, as [h]is postles seten at mete.

' Wou ² sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?

5 [Wou sitte ye, postles, ant wi nule ye ete?]
Ic am ibougt ant isold to-day for oure ³ mete.'

Up stod him Judas: ' Lord, am I þat?
I nas never o þe stude ⁴ þer me ⁵ þe evel spec. ⁶'

10 Up him stod Peter, ant spec wid al is migte:
' þau ⁷ Pilatus him come wid ten hundred cnigtes,

[þau Pilatus him com wid ten hundred cnigtes,]
Yet Ic wolde, Loverd, for þi love figte.'

' Still þou be, Peter! wel I þe icnowe ⁸;
þou wolt fursake me þrien ⁹ ar þe coc him crowe.'

ST. STEPHEN AND HEROD

About 1450. From MS. Brit. Mus. Sloane 2593, as printed by Chaucer,
Ballads, No. 22.

15 Seynt Stevene was a clerk in Kyng Herowdes halle,
And servyd him of bred and cloþ, ¹⁰ as every kyng befall

Stevyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde;
He saw a sterre was fayr and brygt over Bedlem stonde

¹ refl.

² how (is it that); or read wi?

³ your

⁴ place

⁵ any one

⁶ spake

⁷ though

⁸ know

⁹ thaire

¹⁰ tablecloth

7. þat: Mätzner (*Altengl. Sprachproben* 1. 114) suggests *wrech* after this word; but would the *c* of *spec* be palatal?

He kyst¹ adoun þe boris hed, and went into þe halle.

'I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle.

'I forsak þe, Kyng Herowdes, and þi werkes alle;

þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'

'Quat eylyt² þe, Stevene? quat³ is þe befalle?

5

Lakkyt⁴ þe eyþer mete or drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle?'

'Lakit me neyþer mete ne drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle;

þer is a chyld in Bedlem born is beter þan we alle.'

'Quat eylyt þe, Stevyn? art þu wod,⁵ or þu gynnyst to brede⁶?

10

Lakkyt þe eyþer gold or fe, or ony ryche wede⁷?'

'Lakyt me neyþer gold ne fe, ne non ryche wede;

þer is a chyld in Bedlem born xai⁸ helpyn us at our nede.'

'þat is al so soþ, Stevyn, al so soþ, iwys,

As þis capoun crowe xal þat lyþ here in myn dysh.'

þat word was not so sone seyð, þat word in þat halle,

15

þe capoun crew *Cristus natus est!* among þe lordes alle.

'Rysyt⁹ up, myn turmentowres, be to¹⁰ and al[s]¹¹ be on,

And ledyt Stevyn out of þis town, and stonyt hym wyth ston!'

Tokyn he¹² Stevene, and stonyd hym in the way,

And perfore is his evyn¹³ on Crystes owyn day.

20

¹ cast

² ails

³ what

⁴ fails

⁵ mad

⁶ be pregnant (?)

⁷ garment

⁸ shall

⁹ rise (imp.)

¹⁰ by two

¹¹ also

¹² they took

¹³ eve, vigil

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO VENUS

Troilus and Criseyde 3. 1-14, which is translated from Boccaccio's *Filostrato*
3. 585-600:

O luce eterna, il cui lieto splendore
Fa bello il terzo ciel, dal qual ne piove
Piacere, vaghezza, pietade ed amore;
Del sole amica, e figliuola di Giove,
Benigna donna d' ogni gentil core,
Certa cagion del valor che mi muove
A' sospir dolci della mia salute,
Sempre lodata sia la tua virtute.

Il ciel, la terra, lo mare e l' inferno
Ciascuno in sè la tua potenza sente,
O chiara luce; e s' io il ver discerno,
Le piante, i semi, e l' erbe puramente,
Gli uccel, le fiere, i pesci con eterno
Vapor ti senton nel tempo piacente,
E gli uomini e gli dei, nè creatura
Senza di te nel mondo vale o dura.

For an extended comment, see my article, *Herrig's Archiv* 119 (1907). 40-54.

O blisful light, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene¹ faire;
O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,
Plesaunce of love, O goodly, debonaire,²
5 In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire;
O verray cause of hele³ and of gladnesse,
Yheried⁴ be thy might and thy goodnesse!

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
10 As man, brid, best, fish, herbe, and grene tree
Thee fele in tymes with vapour⁵ eterne.
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne⁶;
And in this world no lyves⁷ creature,
Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.

¹ that of Venus

² gracious

³ well-being

⁴ praised, exalted

⁵ inspiration

⁶ forbid

⁷ living

CHAUCER, INVOCATION TO THE TRINITY

Troilus and Criseyde 5. 1863-1869. The first three lines are from Dante, *Paradiso* 14. 28-30:

Quell' uno e due e tre che sempre vive,
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,
Non circonscriitto, e tutto circonscrive.

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne onlyve,¹
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscrip, and al mayst circumscrieve,
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everychoon,
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace digne,²
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!

¹ in life, living

² worthy

PLAYS

THE CLERIC AND THE MAIDEN

This fragmentary 'interlude,' belonging to the thirteenth century, is the first English comedy, and the only one extant from the Middle Ages. It was printed by Wright from a manuscript then in private hands, but now MS. Brit Mus. Add. 23,986, written about 1300 by a French scribe. A more critical edition is by Heuser (*Anglia* 30. 306-19). According to the latter, the dialect indicates south Yorkshire or north Lincolnshire; as there is mention in *Dame Sirith* (see above, p. 145) of Boston, in Lincolnshire, the two works belong to the same region, though the manuscript of *Dame Sirith* hails from Worcester. Heuser assumes that both works rest upon a lost interlude. He concludes:

1. *Dame Sirith* was originally written in rhyming couplets.
2. *Dame Sirith* has only 47 narrative lines (24 of these at the beginning out of 450, and these occur almost exclusively when a new character enters everything indicates that it was an interlude before it was a fabliau.
3. *Dame Sirith* and our interlude are akin in subject, dramatic character, verse, dialect, and occasionally in phraseology; hence both repose upon thirteenth-century interlude.
4. Various changes of the original appear in *Dame Sirith* (narrative additions, verse, dialect), so that our interlude does not spring from the fabliau. In the interlude the deceived woman is a girl, not, as in every other version, a wife; hence the fabliau does not spring from the present interlude. It is likely that each author worked, not from a manuscript, but from his own recollection of the acted interlude.

5. The names throw no light upon a possible French origin. For (a) as the scribe was French (Heuser, p. 310), the saints, Michel and Dinis, signify nothing; (b) Mome Elwis and Malkyn are English names; the Margeri of *Dame Sirith* is French, but must have been used in England; the Willeki of *Dame Sirith* is English; Sirith is Scandinavian (= Sigrith); the Nelde of *Dame Sirith* is hardly a proper name, but possibly from OE. *ealh*, old. Elwi or Helwys, points to the eastern part of England, where there occur such family-names as Helwys and Elwes.

With respect to Heuser's (5), the indications are that behind the *Clericus Puella* there was a French original. Malkyn has a termination borrowed from Dutch or Low German, but the first syllable is from the French Matilda (not that the wife of Henry I changed her original name of Eadgyth, Edith, to Matilda). Mome (MS. Mome) is borrowed from Scandinavian or Dutch. The other names point clearly to France: to the saints, Michael and Denis, and

Leonard (cf. above, p. 387), who is associated with the vicinity of Limoges; and Elwis is surely the French Heluis (Helois, Heluiz, Helui, Heloi, Eluys), which is frequently found in the French feudal epic before 1180—thirteen times in *Garin le Lorrain*, for instance (Langlois, *Table des Noms Propres dans les Chansons de Geste*, pp. 329–30); compare Chaucer's 'Helowys' in *Wife of Bath's Prologue* 677, referring to the mistress of Abelard. Then *fayllard*, 4778 (following its noun), is French, like the *boinard* of *Dame Sirith* (15219). As to *Dame Sirith*, the name Margeri is French, as we have seen; Willekin has the same ending as Malkyn; and Nelde (rather, nelde) represents a variant spelling of 'needle' (the one crone may have ostensibly supported herself with her needle, as the other with her distaff).

Compare the *Debate of the Cleric and the Maiden*, pp. 418–20, above.

The interlude begins: *Hic incipit Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, and these names are retained throughout the stage-directions; I have substituted *Cler.* and *Maid.* I have also supplied the headings for the scenes, and made several emendations.

The manuscript commonly represents initial *h* (and occasionally *g*) by *y*; I have restored the original forms. It also confounds *w* and *v*, supplies and omits *h* at random, etc.

SCENE I

MAIDEN'S home. *Enter CLERIC and MAIDEN*

Cler. Damisel,¹ reste wel!

Maid. Sir, welcum, by Saynt Michel!

Cler. Wer es ty² sire? Wer es ty dame?

Maid. By Gode, es noþer³ her at hame.

Cler. Wel wor suilc a man to life,

þat suilc a may mihte⁴ have to wyfe⁵!

Maid. Do way, by Crist and Leonard!

No wil Y lufe na clerc fayllard⁶;

Na kep⁷ I herbherg⁸ clerc in huse no⁹ y¹⁰ flore,¹¹

Bot¹² his hers¹³ ly wituten¹⁴ dore.

Go forth þi way, god sire,

For¹⁵ her hastu losyt¹⁶ al þi hire.¹⁷

¹ MS. damishel

² thy (*t* for *th*, as elsewhere)

³ neither

⁴ MS. mithe

⁵ Cf. 1457–8

⁶ deceitful

⁷ care

⁸ to harbor

⁹ nor

¹⁰ on

¹¹ Cf. 14527

¹² unless

¹³ rump

¹⁴ outside the

¹⁵ MS. ff., and always below

as initial

¹⁶ MS. losye; cf. 1475

¹⁷ MS. wile; cf. *Childhood of Jesus* 1384 (ca. 1300) in Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, 1875: 'Elles we leosez boþe ore ðwile and huyre.'

Cler. Nu, nu, by Crist and by Sant Jhon,
 In al þis land ne wist I none,
 Mayden, þat Hi luf mor þan þe;
 Hif me nicht ever þe better¹ be!
 5 For þe Hy sory² nicht and day;
 Y may say, 'Hay,³ wayleuay!'
 Y luf þe mar⁴ þan mi lif;
 Þu hates me mar þan gayt⁵ dos cnif⁶ —
 Þat es nou⁷tt⁸ for mysgilt.⁹
 10 Certes,⁹ for þi luf ham Hi spilt.¹⁰
 A, suyte¹¹ mayden, reu of me,¹²
 Þat es ty luf, hand ay sal be!
 For þe luf of þ[e] mod[er]¹³ of hevene,¹⁴
 Þu mend þi mode,¹⁵ and her my stevene.¹⁶
 15 *Maid.* By Crist of hevene, and Sant Jon¹⁷!
 Clerc of scole ne kep¹⁸ I non,
 For many god wymman haf þai don scam[e] —
 By Crist, þu nichtis haf be¹⁹ at hame²⁰!
Cler. Syn²¹ it n[on] opir²² gat²³ may be,
 20 Jesu Crist²⁴ bytech²⁵ Y þe,
 And send[e]²⁶ neulic²⁷ bot²⁸ tharinne,
 Þat Y²⁹ be lesit³⁰ of al my pine.³¹
Maid. Go nu, truan,³² go nu, go,
 For mikel þu canst³³ of sory and wo!

1 MS. bether

2 sorrow

3 alas

4 more

5 goat; MS. yayt (gayt?)

6 knife; MS. chuief (em. Heuser)

7 not

8 misdeed

9 MS. certhes

10 undone

11 sweet; MS. suythe

12 Cf. 146 12

13 MS. y mod (em. H.)

14 MS. efne

15 Cf. 146 11

16 cry

17 MS. Jone

18 care for

19 been

20 Cf. 147 6

21 MS. synt

22 MS. nopir; cf. 480 10

23 way

24 dat.

25 commend; MS. bytethy (em. H.)

26 may he send

27 soon; MS. neulit (em. H.)

28 amendment, help

29 MS. yi

30 freed

31 woe

32 vagabond

33 MS. canstu

SCENE II

ELWIS' home. *Enter CLERIC and ELWIS*

Cler. God te blis,¹ mone² Helwis.

Mone² Elwis. Son, welcum, by San Dinis³!

Cler. Hic am comin⁴ to þe, mone⁵;

þu hel⁶ me noht,⁷ þu say me sone.

Hic am a clerc þat hauntes⁸ scole;

Y led⁹ my lif wyt mikel dole¹⁰;

Me wor lever to be ded¹¹

þan led the lif þat Hyc led,¹²

For an¹³ mayden wit¹⁴ and schen¹⁵ —

Fayrer ho¹⁶ lond hav¹⁷ Y non sen.¹⁸

Ȝo¹⁹ hat²⁰ mayden Malkyn, Y wene —

Nu þu wost quam²¹ Y mene;

Ȝo wonys at the tounes ende,

þat suyt lif, so fayr and hende²²;

Bot-if Ȝo wil hir mod amende,

Neuly Crist my ded me send[e]²³!

Men send²⁴ me hyder, wytuten²⁵ fayle,

To haf þi help an[d] ty cunsayle.²⁶

þarfor am Y cummen here,

þat þu salt be my herandbere,²⁷

To mac me and þat mayden sayct,²⁸

And Hi sal gef þe of myn ayct,²⁹

So þat hever, al þi lyf,

Saltu be þe better³⁰ wyf;

¹ bless; cf. 148 4

² aunt; MS. mome (see note 5)

³ Cf. 148 10

⁴ come

⁵ MS. mome (mone rhymes with sone, 'soon,' in Gower, *Conf. Am.* i. 97)

⁶ conceal

⁷ nothing; MS. noth

⁸ frequent

⁹ lead; MS. lydy

¹⁰ Cf. 148 17-18

¹¹ MS. dedh

¹² MS. ledh

¹³ MS. ay

¹⁴ white; MS. with

¹⁵ beautiful

¹⁶ on, in

¹⁷ MS. haw

¹⁸ MS. syen

¹⁹ she; MS. yo

²⁰ is named

²¹ whom

²² gracious

²³ opt.

²⁴ they (one) sent

²⁵ MS. vyt-

²⁶ Cf. 149 1-2

²⁷ messenger

²⁸ at one; cf. 150 8

²⁹ property

³⁰ richer

So help me Crist — and ¹ Hy may spede,
 Riche ² saltu haf þi mede! ³
Mone ⁴ *Ellwis*. A, son, wat ⁵ saystu? Benedicite ⁶!
 Lift hup þi hand, and blis þe!
 5 For it es boyt ⁷ syn and scam[e]
 þat þu on me hafs layt thys blam[e];
 For Hic am an ald ⁸ quyne ⁹ and a lam[e], ¹⁰
 Y led my lyf wit Godis gram[e] ¹¹;
 Wit my roc ¹² Y me fede;
 10 Can I do non othir dede
 Bot my Pater Noster and my Crede ¹³
 (To say Crist for missedede),
 And myn Avy Mary
 (For my synnes ¹⁴ Hic am sorry),
 15 And my *De Profundis*
 (For al that yn sin lys);
 For can I me non opir þing, ¹⁵
 þat wot Crist, of hevene Kyng. ¹⁶
 Jesu Crist, of hevene hey,
 20 Gef ¹⁷ that þay may heng hey,
 And gef þat Hy may se
 þat þay be heng on a tre
 þat þis ley as leyt ¹⁸ me onne, ¹⁹
 For aly ²⁰ wyman am I on. ²¹ . . .

¹ if

² richly

³ Cf. 1495

⁴ MS. mome

⁵ MS. vat

⁶ *Pron.* bencitee; cf. 1497

⁷ both

⁸ old

⁹ quean

¹⁰ Cf. 149 10-18

¹¹ anger; MS. love (em. suggested by H.; cf. *grome*, 149 11)

¹² distaff

¹³ Cf. 149 21-23

¹⁴ MS. scynnes

¹⁵ MS. þ

¹⁶ MS. k

¹⁷ grant

¹⁸ lie hav

¹⁹ MS. o

²⁰ holy:

²¹ one

THE CHESTER NOAH'S FLOOD

Even as early as the fourth century, Greek Christian preachers introduced dramatic dialogue into their sermons, no doubt under the influence of the dramatic tradition which had been perpetuated from the classic age; and they were imitated by certain of the Latin Fathers. Such dialogue is found, again, in the *Christ* of the Old English poet, Cynewulf. Thus, before the ritual of the Church developed into the beginnings of the miracle-play, the dramatic element in Scriptural narrative had been accentuated in both the East and the West (Cook, 'A Remote Analogue to the Miracle Play,' in *Jour. Eng. and Germ. Phil.* 4 (1903). 421-51; cf. 5. 62-4).

In the tenth century, the *Concordia Regularis* of St. Æthelwold (A.D. 965-975), in the ceremony for the third nocturn at matins on Easter morning, directs three brethren to represent the women who go to the sepulchre, and one the angel seated at the door of the tomb. As they approach, the angel says: *Quem queritis in sepulchro, O Christicolæ?* To which the three reply: *Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum.* And he answers: *Non est hic; surrexit, sicut prædixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis,* etc. (Chambers, *Medieval Stage* 2. 308; cf. Gayley, *Plays of Our Forefathers*, pp. 17-8).

The rise and progress of the miracle-play are well sketched by Jusserand (*Lit. Hist. Eng. People* 1. 456 ff.):

'The imitation of any action is a step towards drama. Conventional, liturgical, ritualistic as the imitation was, still there was an imitation in the ceremony of mass; and mass led to the religious drama, which was therefore, at starting, as conventional, liturgical, and ritualistic as could be. Its early beginning is to be sought for in the antiphoned parts of the service, and then it makes one with the service itself. . . . A great step was made when, at the principal feasts of the year, Easter and Christmas, the chanters, instead of giving their responses from their stalls, moved in the Church to recall the action commemorated on that day; additions were introduced into the received text of the service; religious drama begins then to have an existence of its own. "Tell us, shepherds, whom do you seek in this stable?"—They will answer: "Christ the Saviour, our Lord." Such is the starting-point; it dates from the tenth century; from this is derived the play of Shepherds, of which many versions have come down to us. . . .

'Verse replaced prose; the vulgar idiom replaced Latin; open air and the public square replaced the church nave and its subdued light. It was no longer necessary to have recourse to priests wearing a dalmatic in order to represent midwives; the feminine parts were performed by young boys dressed as women. . . .

'The religious drama was on the way to lose its purely liturgical character when the conquest of England had taken place. Under the reign of the Norman and Angevin kings, the taste for dramatic performances increased considerably; within the first century after Hastings we find them numerous

and largely attended. The oldest representation the memory of which has come down to us took place at the beginning of the twelfth century. . . . A little later in the same century, Fitzstephen, who wrote under Henry II, mentions as a common occurrence the "representations of miracles" held in London. In the following century, under Henry III, some were written in the English language. During the fourteenth century, in the time of Chaucer, mysteries were at the height of their popularity. . . .

'In a more or less complete state, the collections of the Mysteries performed at Chester, Coventry, Woodkirk, and York have been preserved, without speaking of fragments of other series. Most of those texts belong to the fourteenth century, but have been retouched at a later date. Old Mysteries did not escape the hand of the improvers, any more than old churches, where any one who pleased added paintings, porches, and tracery, according to the fashion of the day. . . .

'Once emerged from the Church, the drama had the whole town in which to display itself; and it filled the whole town. On these days the city belonged to dramatic art; each company had its cars or scaffolds, *pageants* (placed on wheels in some towns), each car being meant to represent one of the places where the events in the play happened. The complete series of scenes was exhibited at the main crossings, or on the principal squares or open spaces in the town. . . .

'While in the theatre of Bacchus the tragedies of Sophocles were played once and no more, the Christian drama, remodeled from century to century, was represented for four hundred years before immense multitudes; and this is a unique phenomenon in the history of literature.'

According to Gayley (*op. cit.*, pp. 132-3; cf. pp. 128-31) the Chester cycle, at least in part, was in existence in the first third of the fourteenth century, and its present form probably represents a revision made not far from 1400 (see also Ten Brink, *English Literature* 2.1274; Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, pp. xix-xxi; Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, p. xxxvi; Cook, in *Nation* of May 27, 1915, p. 599). The manuscripts, five in number, are, however, much later (1591-1604).

Pollard thus characterizes these plays (p. xxxvii): 'There is less in the Chester plays to jar on modern feelings than in any other of the cycles. The humor is kept more within bounds, the religious tone is far higher.' Of the *Noah's Flood*, Gayley says (p. 151): 'The characters are distinct and consistently developed. The comic episodes are natural and justifiable, for they serve to display, not to distort, character, and they grow out of the dramatic action. They are, moreover, varied, and, to some extent, cumulative.' Chaucer thus alludes to the stubbornness of Noah's wife (*Miller's Tale* 352-7):

'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also
The sorwe of Noe with his felawshipe,
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?
Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
That she hadde had a ship hirself allone.

Our text is based upon MS. Harl. 2124 (H.), as printed by Deimling (E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser. 62. 48-63), with certain stage-directions and variants from MS. Bodley 175 (B.), as contained in Deimling's edition, and from MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 10,305 (W.), as printed by Thomas Wright in 1843. For the Latin names of the characters, *Noe*, etc., I have substituted the corresponding English ones.

There is a duplication of the dumb show of making the ark, of the command to take the beasts by sevens, and of the comic episode of Noah's wife; this looks as though two drafts had been rather clumsily patched together.

There are emendations by Kölbing in *Engl. Stud.* 16. 280; 21. 163.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

GOD

NOAH

NOAH'S WIFE

SHEM

SHEM'S WIFE

HAM

HAM'S WIFE

JAPHETH

JAPHETH'S WIFE

*First, in some heigh place or in the cloudes, yf it
may be, GOD speaketh unto NOE, standing
without the arke, with all his family :¹*

God. I, God, that all the world have wrought,
Heaven and earth, and all of nought,
I see my people, in deede and thought,
Are sett[e] fowle in sinne.

My Ghost shall not lenge² in mon³ —
That through fleshlie liking is my fone⁴. —
But⁵ till vi skore yeares be gone,
To loke if they will blynne.⁶

5

Manne that I made I will destroy,
Beast, worme, and fowle to flie,
For on earthe they doe me n[o]ye⁷ —
The folke that are theron;

10

¹ From B.; the corresponding Latin is in H.

² remain (Vulg. *permanebit*)

³ MS. man; W. mone

⁴ foes (plural, because *man* is used collectively)

⁵ except

⁶ cease; see Gen. 6. 3, 5

⁷ cause me annoyance

Hit harmes me so hartfullie¹ —
 The malyce that now² can³ multieply —
 That sore it greveth me inwardlie
 That ever I made mon.⁴

5 Therefore, Noe, my servant free.
 That righteous man art, as I see,
 A shipp sone thou shalt make the,
 Of trees drye and lighte;
 Little chambers therein thou make,
 10 And bynding slich⁵ also thou take;
 Within and out thou ne slake⁶
 To noynte⁷ it through thy⁸ mighte.⁹

300 cubytes it shall be long,
 And 50 of breadth,¹⁰ to mak it stronge;
 15 Of heighte 30¹¹; the mete¹² thou longe,¹⁰
 Thus measure it about.
 One wyndow worch, through thy wytte;
 One cubyte of length and breadth¹² make it.
 Upon the side a dore shall sit,
 20 For to come in and out.¹⁴

Eating-places thou make also:
 Three-roofed chambers one or two;
 For with water I thinke to slowe¹⁵
 Man that I can make;
 25 Destroyed all the world shal be
 Save thou, thy wife, thy sonnes three,
 And all there wives also with thee
 Shall saved be for thy sake.¹⁶

¹ at the heart
² MS. now that

³ doth

⁴ MS. manne; see Gen. 6.6

⁵ pitch

⁶ fail

⁷ MS. annoynte

⁸ MS. all thy

⁹ Gen. 6. 14

¹⁰ MS. breadeth

¹¹ MS. 50

¹² measure

¹³ take

¹⁴ Gen. 6. 16

¹⁵ slay

¹⁶ Gen. 6. 16-18

Noah. Ah Lord, I thanke the lowd and still,
That to me art in such will,
And spares me and my house to spill,¹

As now I sothlie fynde.
Thy bydding, Lord, I shall fulfill,
And never more the greeve ne grill,²
That suche grace has sent me till³
Among all mankinde.

Have done, yow men and women all;
Helpe, for ought that may befall,
To worke this shipp, chamber and hall,
As God hath bydden us doe.

Shem. Fader,⁴ I am already bowne⁵;
Anne axe I have, by my crowne⁶!
As sharpe as any in all this towne,
For to goe thereto.

Ham. I have a hatchet wonder kene,
To byte well, as may be seene;
A better grownden, as I weene,
Is not in all this towne.

Japheth. And I can well make a pyn,
And with this hammer knock yt in;
Goe and worche without more dynne;
And I am ready bowne.

Noah's Wife. And we shall bring tymber to,
For wee nothing els mon⁷ doe;
Women be weake to underfoe
Any great travayle.

Shem's Wife. Here is a good hackstock⁸;
On this yow maye hew and knock;

¹ destroy
² offend
³ to me

⁴ MS. father
⁵ prepared
⁶ head

⁷ may; MS. mon nothing els
⁸ chopping-block

Shall non be idle in this flock,
Ne now may no man fayle.

Ham's Wife. And I will goe to gather sliche,
The ship for to caulke¹ and piche;
Anoynt² yt must be every stich —
Board, tree, and pyn.

Japheth's Wife. And I will gather chippes here,
To make a fire for yow in feere,³
And for to dight[e]⁴ your dynner,
Against [that] yow come in.⁵

*Then NOVE begineth to builde the arcke; and
speaketh NOVE:*⁶

Noah. Now, in Gods name,⁷ I will begin
To make the shippe that we shall in,⁸
That we be ready for to swym

At the cominge of the flood.
These bordes I joyne here togeder,⁹
To kepe us safe from the wedder,
That we may row both hider¹⁰ and thider,
And safe be from this floode.

Of this tree will I make the mast,
Tyde with cables¹¹ that will last,
With a sayleyarde for each blast,
And each thinge in ther kinde;
With topcastle and bowspreet,¹²
With coardes and ropes, I have all meete
To sayle forth at the next weete¹³;
This shipp is at an ende.¹⁴

MS. cleane (em. W.)
MS. anoynted; em. sug-
gested by Deimling
1 (*lit.* in company)
ake ready

⁵ MS. adds: Tunc faciunt
signa quasi laborarent
cum diversis instru-
mentis

⁶ From W.

⁷ MS. the name of God

⁸ inhabit

⁹ MS. -gether

¹⁰ MS. hither

¹¹ MS. gables; W. cabb

¹² MS. bewsprytt; cf. O1

¹³ wet, rain

¹⁴ MS. adds: Tunc Noe
cum tota familia,
signa laborandi cu
versis instru-

[*God.*] Of beastes uncleane two and two,
 Male and female, without moe¹;
 Of cleane fowles seaven alsoe,
 The hee and shee togeder²;
 Of fowles uncleane two,³ and no more,
 As I of beastes said before,
 That shal be saved throughe my lore,
 Against I send the wedder.⁴

5

Of all meates that must be eaten
 Into the ship loke there be getten,
 For that no way may be forgeten⁵;
 And doe all this bydeene,⁶
 To sustayne man and beast therein
 Aye till the water cease and blyn⁷;
 This world is filled full of synne,
 And that is now well sene.

10

15

Seaven dayes be yet coming —
 You shall have space them in to bringe;
 After that is my lyking⁸
 Mankinde for to n[o]ye;
 40 dayes and 40 nightes
 Rayne shall fall for ther unrightes,⁹
 And that I have made through my mightes
 Now think I to destroye.¹⁰

20

Noah. Lord, to thy¹¹ byddinge I am bayne¹²;
 Seinge¹³ non other grace will gayne,
 Hit will I fulfill fayne,
 For gracious I thee fynde.

25

¹ more² MS. -gether³ But cf. Gen. 7. 3⁴ MS. wedder⁵ MS. -yeten; W. -getten⁶ straightway⁷ stop; see Gen. 6. 21⁸ purpose⁹ iniquities¹⁰ Gen. 7. 4¹¹ MS. at your (em. W.)¹² willing¹³ MS. sith (em. W.)

A 100 wynters and 20
 This shipp making taried have I,
 If through amendmēt any mercye
 Wolde fall unto mankinde.

5 Have done, you men and women all;
 Hye you lest this water fall —
 That¹ each beast were in his stall,
 And into the ship broughte.
 Of cleane beastes seaven shal be,
 Of uncleane two — this God bade me;
 This floode is nye, well may we see,
 Therefore tary you noughte.

*Then NOYE shall goe into the arke with all his
 family, his wief except, and the arke must
 be borded rounde about, and one the bordes
 all the beastes and fowles hereafter receaved
 must be painted, that thes wordes may agree
 with the pictures.²*

15 *Shem.* Syr, here are lyons, libardes in,
 Horses, mares, oxen, and swyne,
 Geates, calves, sheepe, and kine,
 Here sitten thou may see;
 Camels, asses, men may finde,
 Bucke [and] doe, harte and hynde;
 And beastes of all manner kinde
 20 Here bene, as thinkes mee.

Japheth. Take here cattles, dogges³ to,
 Otter, fox, fulmart⁴ also;

¹ (hasten) that

² From B.; the Latin (from H.) runs: Tunc Noe introibit archam, et familia sua dabit et recitabit omnia animalia depicta in cartis,

et, postquam unus quisque suam locutus est partem, ibit in archam, uxore Noe excepta, et animalia depicta cum verbis concor-

dare debent; et sic incipit primus filius

³ MS. cattles and dogges;
 W. cattles, dogges

⁴ polecat

Hares, hopping, gaylie can goe —

Have cowle¹ here for to eate.

Noah's Wife. And here are beares, wolves, sett,

Apes, owles, marmoset;²

Weesells, squirrels, and firret³;

Here they eaten their meate.

5

Shem's Wife. Yet more beastes are in this howse:

Here cattis maken it full crowse⁴;

Here a ratten,⁵ here a mowse,

They stand nye togeder.⁶

10

Ham's Wife. And here are fowles les and more:

Hearnes,⁷ cranes, and byttour,⁸

Swans, peacockes; and them before

Meate for this wedder.

Japheth's Wife. Here are cockes, kites, crowes,

15

Rookes, ravens — many rowes⁹ —

Cuckoes, curlewes — whoever knowes —

Eache one in his kinde;

And here are doves, diggs,¹⁰ drakes,

Redshankes runninge through the lakes;

20

And each fowle that ledden¹¹ makes

In this shipp men may finde.

[*Noah.*] Wife, in this castle we shall be kepte¹²;

My childer and thou I wold¹³ in lepte.¹⁴

Noah's Wife. In faith, I¹⁵ had as lief thou slepte,¹⁶

25

For all thy Frankish¹⁷ fare¹⁸;

¹ cabbage

² monkey

³ ferret

⁴ lively

⁵ rat (cf. Fr. *raton*); MS.

rotten

⁶ MS. -gether

⁷ herons

⁸ bittern

⁹ rows

¹⁰ ducks

¹¹ language (cf. Chaucer,
Squire's Tale 435, 478)

¹² MS. keped; W. kepte

¹³ would (I would that my
children, etc.)

¹⁴ MS. leaped; W. lepte

¹⁵ MS. Noe I; em. suggested
by Deimling

¹⁶ MS. sleppit; W. slepte

¹⁷ French

¹⁸ behavior (?)

I will not doe after thy red[e].¹

Noah. Good wife, doe now as I the bedde²!

Noah's Wife. By Christ, not or³ I see more neede
Though thou stand all day⁴ and stare!

5 *Noah.* Lord, that women be crabbed aye,
And never are meke, that dare I saye!
This is wel sene by me to-daye,

In witnes of yow each one.

Good wife, let be all this beere⁵

10 That thou makes in this place here;
For all they wene thou art master —
So art thou,⁶ by St. John!

*Then NOYE with all his familie shall make a signe
as though the[y] wroughte upon the shippe with
diveres instrumentes. and after that GOD shall
speake to NOYE, sayinge⁷:*

God. Noe, [now] take thou thy meanye,⁸

And in the shippe hye⁹ that thou¹⁰ be,

15 For none so righteous man to me
Is now on earth lyvinge.

Of cleane beastes with thee thou take

Seaven and seaven or thou slake¹¹;

Hee and shee, make¹² to make,

20 Belyve¹³ in that¹⁴ thou bringe.¹⁵

Noah. Wife, come in! Why standes thou here

Thou art ever froward — that dare I sweare!

Come in, on God's half¹⁶! Tyme yt were,

For feare lest that we drowne.

¹ counsel

² MS. bydd; cf. OE. *bēodan*

³ before, till

⁴ MS. the day; W. day

⁵ clamor

⁶ MS. and so thou art

⁷ From W.; cf. note 2 on
p. 488

⁸ company

⁹ hasten

¹⁰ MS. yow

¹¹ stop

12

13

14

15

16

Noah's Wife. Yea, sir, set up your sayle,
 And rowe forth with evill hayle,¹
 For, without[en]² any fayle,
 I will not out of this towne.

But³ I have my gossips everichon, 5
 One foote further I will not gone;
 They shall not drowne, by St. John,
 And⁴ I may save their lyfe!
 They loved me full well, by Christ!
 But³ thou wilt let them in thy chist,⁵ 10
 Rowe⁶ forth, Noe, whether⁷ thou list,
 And get thee a new wife.

Noah. Sem, sonne, loe thy mother is wrow⁸;
 Forsooth such another I do not know.
Shem. Father, I shall fett her in, I trow, 15
 Without[en] any fayle. —
 Mother, my father after thee send,
 And bydds the into yonder ship wend;
 Loke up, and se the wynde,
 For we be readye to sayle. 20

Noah's Wife. Sonne, goe again to him, and say
 I will not come therein to-daye.

Noah. Come in, wife, in 20 devills waye!
 Or els stand there without.

Ham. [Father], shall wee all fet her in? 25

Noah. Yea, sonnes, in Christ's blessinge and myne!
 I would yow hyde⁹ yow betyme,
 For of this flood I doubtte.¹⁰

¹ success; H. heale

² em. from W.

³ unless

⁴ if

⁵ ark

⁶ MS. els rowe

⁷ whither

⁸ angry; MS. wraw (em.
 from W.)

⁹ hied

¹⁰ MS. am in doubtte

[*Noah's Wife.*] The flood comes in full fleetinge fast,¹

On every side it spredeth full ferre²;

For feare of drowning I am agast;

Good gossip, let us draw neare,

And let us drinke or we depart,

For oftentymes we have done soe;

At³ a draught thou drinks a quarte,

And so will I doe or I goe.⁴

Japheth. Mother, we praye you altogeder⁵ —

For we are here your owne childer —

Come into the ship, for feare of the wedder,

For his love that you boughte⁶!

Noah's Wife. That will I not, for all your call,

But⁷ I have my gossopes all.

Shem. In feith, mother, yet you shall,

Whether you will or not.⁸

[*She enters.*

Noah. Welcome, wife, into this boate!

Noah's Wife. And have thou that for thy note⁹!

[*Gives him a box on the ear.*¹⁰

Noah. A, ha! Mary,¹¹ this is hote!

It is good to be still!

A, children, me thinkes my boate remeves,¹²

Our taryng here hugelie me greves;

Over the lande the water spredes;

God doe as he will!

Ah, great God that art so good,

That¹³ worchis not thie will is wood!

Now all this world is on a flood,

As I see well in sighte.

¹ This stanza is noted by Hohlfield as a later addition (*Anglia* II. 270)

² MS. fare (cm. K.)

³ MS. for at (cm. K.)

⁴ B., W. add:

Here is a pottell of Malmesey
good and stronge;

It will rejoy[c]e both hart and
tong;

Though Noy thinke us never
so long,

Yet wee will drinke alyke.

⁵ MS. -gether

⁶ redeemed

⁷ unless

⁸ H. adds: Tunc ibit

⁹ pains (*fit.* benefit); MS.
mote; em. from W.

¹⁰ For the Latin (H.): Et
dat alapam vita

¹¹ marry

¹² moves

¹³ that which, he who

This window I will shut anon,
 And into my chamber will I gone;
 Till this water, so greate one,
 Be slaked¹ through the thy mighte.

*Then shall NOVE shutte the wyndowe of they
 arke, and for a ittill space be silent, and
 afterwarde lokinge rounde aboute shall saye²:*

Now 40 dayes are fullie gone,
 Send a raven I will anone.
 If oughtwhere³ earth, tree, or stone,
 Be drye in any place;
 And if this foule come not againe,
 It is a signe, soth to sayne,
 That drye it is on hill or playne,⁴
 And God hath done some grace.

*Then he shall send forth the raven, and, taking
 a dove in his hand, shall saye⁵:*

Ah, Lord! wherever this raven be,
 Somewhere is drye, well I see,
 But yet a dove — by my lewtye⁶! —
 After I will sende.
 Thou wilt turne againe to me,
 For of all fowles that may flye,⁷
 Thou art most meke and hend.⁸

*Then he shall send forth the dove, and there shall
 be in the ark another dove, which shall be let*

¹ abated

² From W.; the Latin (H.) runs: Tunc Noe claudet fenestram archæ, et per modicum spatium infra tectum content psalmum 'Save mee, O God' [prob-

ably Ps. 69], et aperiens fenestram et respiciens anywhere; perhaps for oughwhere, variant of owhere

⁴ Gen. 8. 6, 7

⁵ Translated from H.: Tunc

dimittet corvum, et, capiens columbam in manibus, dicat

⁶ loyalty, faith

⁷ Here a line seems to have dropped out

⁸ gentle; cf. Gen. 8. 8

*down from the mount, and into the har-
of NOAH; and afterward NOAH shall say*

Ah, Lord! blessed be thou aye,
That hast me comfort² thus to-day;
By this sight; I may well saye,
This flood beginnes to cease;
5 My sweete dove to me brought hase
A branch of olyve from some place;
This betokeneth God has done us grace,³
And is a signe of peace.⁴

Ah, Lord, honoured most thou be!
10 All earthe dryes, now I see,
But yet tyll thou comaunde me
Hence will I not hye.
All this water is awaye;
Therefore, as sone as I maye,
15 Sacryfice I shall doe, in faye,⁶
To thee devoutlye.⁶

God. Noe, take thy wife anone,
And thy children every one;
Out of the shippe thou shalt gone,
20 And they all with thee;
Beastes, and all that can flie,
Out anone they shall hye,
On earth to grow and multeplie;
I will that yt soe be.⁷

25 *Noah.* Lord, I thanke the through thy might,
Thy bidding shall be done in height,⁸

¹ Translated from H.: Tunc
emittet columbam, et erit
in nave alia columba, fe-
rens olivam in ore, quæ
demittetur [MS. quam de-
mittet] ex malo per funem

in manus Noe; et postea
dicat Noe
² comforted
³ MS. some grace
⁴ Gen. 8. 11

⁵ faith

⁶ Gen. 8. 20

⁷ MS. be soe (em. F.
cf. Gen. 8. 16, 17)

⁸ with speed

And, as fast as I may dighte,¹
 I will doe the honoure,
 And to thee offer sacrifice;
 Therefore comes,² in all wise,
 For of these beastes that bene hise
 Offer I will this stower.³

*Then, going out from the ark with his whole
 family, he shall take with him his animals
 and birds, and shall offer them and slay.⁴*

Lord God in majestye,
 Thou⁵ such grace hast graunted me,
 Where all was lorne, save⁶ to be;
 Therefore now I am bowne,
 My wife, my childer, my meanye,⁷
 With sacrifice to honoure thee;
 With beastes, fowles, as thou may see,
 I offer here right sone.⁸

God. Noe, to me thou arte full able,⁹
 And thy sacrifice acceptable;
 For I have fownd thee trew and stable,
 On the now must I myn¹⁰;
 Warry¹¹ earth will I no more
 For mans synne that greves me sore,
 For, of¹² youth, man full yore
 Has byn enclyned to synne.¹³

You shall now grow and multiply,
 And earth, againe, you edifie¹⁴;
 Each beast, and fowle that may live,
 Shall be afraid of you:

¹ make ready

² imp. plur.

³ store

⁴ Translated from H.: Tunc
 egrediens archam cum
 tota familia sua, accipiet

animalia sua et volantes
 et offeret ea ei sicut sacrificium

⁵ MS. that

⁶ safe

⁷ nom.

⁸ Cf. Gen. 8. 20

⁹ Gen. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

¹⁰ Gen. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

¹¹ Gen. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

¹² Gen. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

¹³ Gen. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

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And fishe in sea, that may flete,¹
 Shall susteyne yow, I yow behete²;
 To eate of them yow ne lete³
 That cleane bene you may knowe.⁴

5 Thereas⁶ you have eaten before
 Grasse and rootes sith you were bore,
 Of cleane beastes now, les and more,
 I geve you leave to eate;
 Safe⁶ bloode and flesh, bothe in feare,⁷
 10 Of⁸ wrong-dead carren⁹ that is here;
 Eates not of that in no manere,
 For that aye you shall let[e].¹⁰

Manslaughter also you shall flee,
 For that is not pleasant to me;
 15 That¹¹ shedes bloode, he or shee,
 Oughtwhere amongst mankinne,¹²
 That blood foule sheede shal be,
 And venge[a]nce have, that men shall se;
 Therefore beware now all[e] yee,
 20 You fall not in that synne.¹³

A forwarde¹⁴ now with thee¹⁶ I make,
 And all thy seede for thy sake,
 Of suche vengeance for to slake,
 For now I have my will.
 25 Here I behet the a heaste¹⁶ —
 That man [ne] woman, fowle ne beaste,
 With water, while the world shall l[e]ast[e],¹⁷
 I will [them] no more spill.¹⁸

¹ float, swim; MS. flytte

² promise; MS. -hite

³ refrain, forbear; MS. lett

⁴ that you may know to be clean;

Gen. 9. 1-3; cf. 7. 2; 8. 20

⁶ whereas

⁶ save

⁷ together; Gen. 9. 4

⁸ Miswritten for 'or'?

⁹ carrion; see Lev. 22. 8

¹⁰ leave

¹¹ whoever

¹² MS. -kinde; em. suggested by Ballard

¹³ Gen. 9. 5, 6

¹⁴ covenant

¹⁵ MS. thie

¹⁶ promise

¹⁷ em. K.

¹⁸ destroy; Gen. 9. 9-

My bowe betwene you and me
 In the firmament shall bee,
 By verey token, that you may see
 That such vengeance shall cease;
 That man ne woman shall never more
 Be wasted by water, as was¹ before²;
 But for syn, that greveth me sore,
 Therefore this vengeance wes.³

Where cloudes in the welkin bene,
 That ilke bowe shall be sene,
 In tokeninge that my wrath and tene
 Shall never thus⁴ wroken be;
 The stringe is turned toward you,
 And toward me is bent the bowe,
 That such wedder shall never showe;
 And this behett I thee.⁵

My blessing now I geve the here,
 To thee. Noe, my servant dere,
 For vengeance shall no more appeare;
 And now farewell, my darling deere.⁶

THE BROME PLAY OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Lucy Toulmin Smith, the first editor (in 1884) thus characterizes the play, in comparison with the five others on the same subject (*Anglia* 7, 332): 'On the whole, the Brome version now printed is superior to those above described in the touches of child-nature, and in the play of feeling skilfully shown — the dear coquetting between the love of his child and the committal of the deed by the obedient but agonized father. The child begging his father not to kill him, and his fear of the sword even after all danger is over, . . . are touched in with a life not found elsewhere. The thought of the mother . . . breaks out in the most natural and affecting manner. . . . and the joyful rebound of emotion after the painful strain between duty and affection, expressing itself in the kisses of Abraham and the apostrophes of Isaac to the "gentle sheep,"

¹ MS. is⁴ MS. this⁶ W. adds:² Gen. 9, 12-15⁵ Gen. 9, 16*Finis. Deo gracias! fer me, George Bellin, 1592.
Come, Lorde Jesu, come quicklȳe.*³ MS. was (em. K.)

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 Shall susteyne yow, I yow behete²;
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My bowe betwene you and me
 In the firmament shall bee,
 By verey token, that you may see
 That such vengeance shall cease;
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10

15

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*Finis. Deo gracias! per me, George Bellin, 1592.
 Come, Lorde Jesu, come quicklye.*

must have warmly appealed to the hearts of the audience. Finally, the lesson of faith for "learned and lewed" and "the wisest of us all" is taught by the "Doctor" in the simplest manner.

Gayley thinks this the third miracle-play in order of time, the first being *The Harrowing of Hell* (ca. 1250), and the second, *Jacob and Esau* (ca. 1280). He says (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 126): 'The Brome play of *Abraham and Isaac*, which comes next in order of production, is undoubtedly the basis of *The Sacrifice of Isaac* in the Chester cycle, and probably in an earlier version dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century.' A particularly close parallel is that between 506 3-6 and the Chester play 289-92 (ed. Deimling, p. 76).

If I have trespassed in any degree,
With a yard you maye beate me;
Put up your sword, if your will be,
For I am but a childe.

The play has been three times printed — by Miss Smith as above (A.), by Lady Kerrison and Miss Smith in 1886 (B.), and by Manly in 1897 (M.). Pollard has reproduced lines 316-435 (*English Miracle Plays*, Appendix IV) following Miss Smith.

The unique manuscript (1470-1480) takes its name from the village of Brome in Suffolk, two miles north of Eye. Brome was from the fourteenth century the seat of the Cornwallis family, to which belonged the Lord Cornwallis who was conspicuous in the American Revolution.

The two editions directly from the manuscript differ here and there in their readings; of the readings I have rejected I have taken no account. Important emendations have been made by Miss Smith, Holthausen (*Anglia* 13 (1891) 361-2), and Manly (*Spec. Pre-Shak. Drama* 1. 41-57). I have been tempted to further efforts at restoration by the remark of Miss Smith (*Anglia* 7. 322-3): 'Judging by the analogy of other plays of the kind, it is probable that this also was originally composed with much care for its poetical form, but has become partially corrupt through oral repetition and the errors of copyists.' All the emendations not attributed to S., H., or M. are by myself; some are perhaps rather daring, but it is easy to revert to the manuscript-readings. Stage directions (following a bracket) have been supplied partly from S. and M.: two or three are found in the manuscript, in Latin.

Miss Smith remarks (*Anglia* 7. 322): 'With regard to the versification, the reader will observe that it is irregular: in several places the lines run in clear stanzas of five lines, riming abaab; in others it appears to be in stanzas of eight lines, riming alternately, with a frequent short line or tag following. There are also many lines which seem to be formless as regards metre, rime, or stanza. Accordingly the indications of stanzaic form are often somewhat obscured in this play.'

I have modernized in the stage-directions the names of certain characters for the sake of consistency — *Deus* to *God*, *The Angell* to *Angel*, *Ysaac* to *Isaac*.

SCENE I

*A field near ABRAHAM'S home in Beersheba**Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC*

Abraham. Fader of hevyn omnipotent,
 With all my hart to the I call;
 Thow hast zoffe¹ me both lond and rent,²
 And my lyvelod thow hast me sent;
 I thanke the evermore³ of all.

5

Fyrst off⁴ the erth pou madyst Adam,
 And Eve also to be hys wyffe;
 All other creatures of them too⁵ cam;
 And now thow hast grant⁶ to me, Abram,⁷
 Her in thys lond to lede my lyffe.

10

In my age pou hast grantyd me thys,
 That thys zowng chyld with me shall wone⁸;
 I love nothyng so myche, iwysse,
 Except ji⁹ selffe, der Fader of blysse,
 As Ysaac her, my owyne swete sone.

15

I have dyverse chydryn moo,
 The wych I love not halffe so wyll¹⁰;
 Thys fayer swet chyld he chereys¹¹ me soo
 In every place wer that I goo,
 That noo dessece¹² her may I fell.¹³

20

And therfor, Fadyr of hevyn, I prey¹⁴
 For hys helth, and also for hys grace;

¹ given
² income
³ MS. heyl: euermore
⁴ of
⁵ two

⁶ granted
⁷ MS. Abraham
⁸ dwell
⁹ MS. thin owyne; see
 next line

¹⁰ well; pronounced wail
¹¹ MS. scherys
¹² discomfort
¹³ feel
¹⁴ MS. the prey

Now, Lord; kepe hym both nyght¹ and day,
That never dessese nor noo [af]fray²
Cume to my chyld in noo place.

Now cum on, Ysaac, my owyne swet chyld;
Goo we hom, and take ovr rest.

Isaac. Abraham, myne owyne fader so myld,
To folowe zow I am full prest,³
Bothe erly and late.

Abraham. Cume on, swete chyld, I love the best
Of all the chyldryn that I⁴ begat. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

Heaven. Enter GOD and an ANGEL

God. Myn angell, fast hey⁵ the thy wey,
And to⁶ medyll erth anon pou goo;
Abra[ha]ms hart now wyll I asay,
Wether that he be stedfast or noo.

Sey I commaw[n]dyd hym for to take
Ysaac, hys sonne,⁷ pat he love[s] so wyll,
And with hys blood sacryfyce he make,
Ony⁸ off my freynchepe [yf] he wyll fell.⁹

Schow hym the wey onto¹⁰ the hylle
Wer that hys sacryffyce schall be.
I schall asay now hys good wyll,
Whether he lovyth¹¹ better hys chyld or me.

All men schall take exampyll be hym
My commawmentes how they schall kepe. [*Exeunt.*]

¹ MS. nygth

² fright, terror

³ ready; MS. glad (em. H.)

⁴ MS. ever I

⁵ haste

⁶ unto; MS. on to

⁷ MS. gowng sonne; cf.

501²¹

⁸ MS. yffe ony

⁹ MS. fell

¹⁰ unto

¹¹ MS. lovyd (em. M.)

SCENE III

A field near ABRAHAM'S home. Enter ABRAHAM

Abraham. Now, Fader of hevyn, þat formyd all thyng,
 My preýeres I make to the aȝeyn,
 For thys day my tender offryng
 Here must I ȝeve to the, certeyn.

A! Lord God, allmyty Kyng,
 Wat maner best ¹ woll make þe most fayn?
 Yff I had therof very knyng,²
 Yt schuld be don with all my mayne³

Full sone by me.⁴
 To don thy plesyng on an hyll,
 Verely yt ys my wyll,
 Dere Fader, God in 'Trinyte.

Enter ANGEL

Angel. Abraham, Abraham, wyll þou rest!
 Owr Lord comandyth þe for to take
 Ysaac, thy ȝowng sone, that thou lovyst best,
 And with hys blod sacryfyce þat thou make.

Into the lond of v[i]syon⁵ thou goo,
 And offer thy chyld onto thy Lord;
 I schall the lede and schow allsoo.
 Unto Goddes hest, Abraham, acord,
 And folow me upon thys grene.

Abraham. Wollecom⁶ to me be my Lordes sond,⁷
 And hys hest I wyll not withstond;
 Ȝyt Ysaac, my ȝowng sonne in lond,
 A full dere chyld to me hase⁸ bene.⁹

¹ beast
² knowing, knowledge
³ might, strength (cf. 'might
 and main')

⁴ MS. anone (em. H.)
⁵ Moriah (Gen. 22. 2); em. H.
⁶ welcome
⁷ messenger

⁸ MS. haue
⁹ MS. byn

I had lever, yf God had be plesyd,
 For to a¹ forbore² all þe good þat I have
 Than Ysaac my sone schuld a be desessyd,³
 So God in hevyn my sowll mot save!

5 I lovȳd never thyng soo mych in erde,⁴
 And now I must the chyld goo kyll.
 A, Lord⁵! my conseons ys stron[g]ly sterd,
 And ȝyt, my dere Lord, I am sore⁷ aferd
 To groche⁸ ony thyng⁹ agens thy wyll.

10 I love my chyld as [I love] my lyffe,
 But ȝyt I love my God myche more,
 For thow my hart woudd make ony stryffe,
 Ȝyt wyll I not spare for chyld nor wyffe,
 But don after my Lordes lore.¹⁰

15 Thow I love my sonne never so wyll,
 Ȝyt smythe of¹¹ hys hed sone I schall.
 A, Fader of hevyn! to the I knell;
 An hard dethe my son schall fell,
 For to honor the, [my] Lord, withall.

20 *Angel.* Abraham! Abraham! thys ys wyll seyde,
 And all thys comamentes loke þou obay¹²;
 But in thy hart be nothyng dysmayd.¹³

Abraham. Nay, nay, I¹⁴ hold me wyll apayd¹⁵
 To plesse¹⁶ my God to the best I¹⁷ may,¹⁸

¹ have

² done without

³ disturbed, put to discomfort, molested

⁴ MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)

⁵ MS. Lord God

⁶ stirred; MS. steryd

⁷ MS. sere (em. H.)

⁸ MS. gowr

⁹ make any complaint

¹⁰ instruction

¹¹ smite off

¹² MS. loke þat þou kepe
 (em. suggested by M.)

¹³ MS. dismayd; em. M.

¹⁴ MS. forsoth I

¹⁵ MS. plesyd (M.
 gests em.)

¹⁶ MS. pelsse

¹⁷ MS. þat I

¹⁸ MS. haue (M.
 gests em.)

For throw my hart be hevely sett

To see the blood of my owyn dere son,

Ȝyt for all thys I wyll not lett.¹

[Exit ANGEL

But Ysaac, my son, I wyll goo fett,

And cum asse fast as ever we conne.²

[Exit

SCENE IV

ABRAHAM'S home. *Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC*

[*Abraham.*] Now, Ysaac, my owyne son [so] dere,

Wer art thou, chyld? Speke to me.

Isaac. My fayer swet fader, I am here.

And make my preyrys to þe Treyste.

Abraham. Rysse up, my chyld, and fast cum heder, 10

My gentyll barn³ þat art so wyse,

For we to,⁴ chyld, must goo togeder,

And onto my Lord make sacrifice.

Isaac. I am full redy, my fader, loo!

Evyn⁵ at þowr handes I stand right⁶ here, 15

And watsoever ge fynd me doo,

Yt schall be don with glad cher.

Full wyll and fyne.

Abraham. Al Ysaac, my owyn son soo dere,

Godes blessing I gyffe the, and myn. 20

Hold thys right upon þi bake,

And þat myselve fyre schall bryng.

Isaac. Fader, all thys her wyll I packe;

I am full fayne to do þowr bedyng.

¹ desist
² M.S. can

³ child
⁴ two

Abraham. A, Lord of hevyn! my handes I wryng,
Thys chyldes wordes all towond¹ my harte.

Now, Ysaac son, goo we owr wey
Onto zon mownte, with all owr mayn.

5 *Isaac.* Go we, my dere fader, as fast as I may;
To folow zow I am full fayn,
Allthow I be slendyr.

Abraham. A, Lord! my hart brekyth on tweyn,²
Thys chyldes wordes, they be so tender.

SCENE V

Mount Moriah. Enter ABRAHAM and ISAAC

10 A, Ysaac, son! anon ley yt down,
No lenger upon þi backe yt hold,³
For I must make redy bo[u]n⁴
To honowr my Lord God as I schold.⁵

15 *Isaac.* Loo, my dere fader, wer yt ys!
To cher⁶ zow allwey I draw me ner;
But, fader, I mervell sore of thys,
Wy þat ze make thys hevvy chere;

And also evermore⁷ dred I:
Wer ys zowr best⁸ þat ze schuld kyll?
20 Both fyre and wood we have redy,
But queke⁹ best have we non on þis hyll;

A qwyke best, I wot wyll, must be ded,
Zowr sacryfyce for to make.¹⁰

¹ wound

² MS. tewyn (em. S.)

³ MS. bere (em. M., following
Kittredge's suggestion)

⁴ prepared

⁵ MS. schuld

⁶ cheer

⁷ MS. fader euermore

⁸ MS. queke best

⁹ living

¹⁰ MS. transposes this line
and the next (em. S.)

Abraham. Dred the nowyht,¹ my chyld, I the red²;
Owr Lord wyll send me onto thys sted³
Summ maner a best for to take,
Throw hys swet sond.

Isaac. Ȝa, fader, but my hart begynnyth to quake
To se þat scharpe sword in ȝowr hond.

Wy bere ȝe ȝowr sword drawyn soo?
Off ȝowre contenauns⁴ I have mych wonder.

Abraham. A, Fader of hevyn, so⁵ I am woo!
Thys chyld her brekys my harte onsonder.⁶

Isaac. Tell me, my dere fader, or that ȝe ses,⁷
Ber ȝe ȝowr sword draw[yn]⁸ for me?

Abraham. A, Ysaac, swet son, pes! [a,] pes!
For iwys thow breke[s] my harte on thre.

Isaac. Now trewly, sumwat, fader, ȝe thynke,⁹
That ȝe morne¹⁰ thus [ay] more and more.

Abraham. A! Lord of hevyn, thy grace let synke,
For my hart was never halffe so sore.

Isaac. I preye ȝow, fader, let¹¹ me þat wyt,¹²
Wyther schall I have ony harme or noo.

Abraham. Iwys, swet son, I may not tell the ȝyt,
My hart ys now soo full of woo.

Isaac. Dere fader, I prey,¹³ hyd yt¹⁴ not fro me,
But sum of ȝowr thowt ȝe¹⁵ tell me [anone].

¹ not at all; MS. -wyth

² counsel

³ place

⁴ countenance; MS. conwnauns

⁵ MS. os (em. S.)

⁶ MS. on too (em. H.)

⁷ cease

⁸ em. M.

⁹ ponder upon

¹⁰ mourn

¹¹ MS. þat ȝe wyll let

¹² know

¹³ MS. prey ȝow

¹⁴ MS. hydygth (em. M.)

¹⁵ MS. þat ȝe

Abraham. A, Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll the!

Isaac. Kyll me, fader? alasse, wat have I done?

Yff I have trespassyd agens zow owt,
 Ze may make me with a zard¹ full myld,
 And with zowr scharp sword kyll me nowt,²
 For iwys, fader, I am but a chyld.

Abraham. I am full sory³ thy blood for to spyll,
 But truly, my chyld, I may not chesc.⁴

Isaac. Now I wold⁶ my moder were on⁶ pis⁷ hyll
 Sche woold knele for me on both hyr knees

To save my lyffe.
 And sythyn⁸ my moder ys not here,
 I prey zow, fader, chonge⁹ zowr chere,
 And kyll me not with zowyr knyffe.

Abraham. Forsothe, son, but-zyf I the kyll,
 I schuld greve God ryght¹⁰ sore, I drede;
 Yt ys hys commawment and also hys wyll
 That I schuld do thys same dede.

He commawdyd me, son, for serteyn,
 To make my sacryfyce with thy blood.

Isaac. And ys yt Goddes wyll pat I schuld be slayn?

Abraham. Ja, truly, Ysaac, my son soo good,
 And therfor my handes I wryng.

¹ rod; MS. with a zard Ze
 may make me

² MS. nogth

³ MS. sory son

⁴ choose

⁵ MS. wold to God

⁶ MS. her on

⁷ A. ys, B. yis (em. M.)

⁸ MS. sybyn pat

⁹ change; MS. schonge

¹⁰ MS. rygth

Isaac. Now, fader, agens my Lordes decre.¹

I wyll never groche, lowd nor styll;
He myght² a³ sent me a better destyne⁴
Yf yt had a be hys wyll.⁵

Abraham. Forsothe, son, but-yf I do⁶ þis dede,
Grevosly dysplessyd owr Lord wyll be.

Isaac. Nay, nay, fader, God forbede
That ever ge schuld greve hym for me.

Ge have other chyldryn, on or too,
The wyche ge schuld love wyll be kynd.⁷
I prey zow, fader, make ge no woo,
For, be I onys ded and fro zow goo,
I schall be sone owt of zowr mynd.

Therfor doo owr Lordes byddyng,
And wan I am ded, than prey for me;
But, good fader, tell ge my moder nothyng,
Say þat I am dwellyng⁸ in another cuntre.⁹

Abraham. A, Ysaac,¹⁰ blessyd mot thou be!

My hart begynnyth¹¹ stron[g]ly to rysse,
To see the blood off thy blyssyd body.

Isaac. Fadyr, syn yt may be noo other wysse,¹²
Let yt passe over as wyll as I;

But, or¹³ I goo onto my deth,
I prey zow blysse me with zowr hond.¹⁴

¹ MS. wyll (em. suggested by M.)

² MS. mygth

³ have

⁴ MS. desteny

⁵ MS. plecer (em. suggested by M.)

⁶ MS. ded

⁷ by nature, naturally

⁸ MS. dewlylyng (em. S.)

⁹ MS. in another cuntre

dewylling

¹⁰ MS. Ysaac, Ysaac

¹¹ MS. begynnyd (em. M.)

¹² wise

¹³ before; MS. fader or

¹⁴ MS. hand

Abraham. Now, Ysaac, [sone,] with all my breth
 My blyssyng I geve þe upon thys lond,
 And Godes also therto, iwys.
 Ysaac, Ysaac, sone, up thow stond,
 Thy fayer swete mowthe þat I may kys.

Isaac. Now farwyll,¹ my owyne fader so fyn,
 And grete wyll my moder in erde.²
 But I prey þow, fader, to hyd my cyne,
 That I se not þe stroke of þowr scharpe swerd,
 That my fleysse schall defyle.

Abraham. Sone, thy wordes make me to wepe full sore;
 Now, my dere son Ysaac, speke no more.

Isaac. A, my owyne dere fader, werefore?
 We schall speke togedyr her but a wyll,⁴

And sythyn that I must nedys⁵ be ded,
 Ȝyt, my dere fader, to þow I prey,
 Smythe but fewe⁶ strokes at my hed,
 And make an end as sone as þe may,
 And tery not to longe.

Abraham. Thy meke wordes, chyld, make me afray⁷;
 So 'Welawey!' may be my songe,

Excepe al only Godes wyll.
 A, Ysaac, my owyn swete chyld,
 Ȝyt kysse me agen upon thys hyll!
 In all thys war[l]d⁸ ys non soo myld.

Isaac. Now truly, fader, all thys teryyng
 Yt doth my hart but harme;
 I prey þow, fader, make an enddyng.

¹ farewell; MS. for-

² MS. erthe (em. M., following S.'s suggestion)

³ MS. sword (em. M.)

⁴ while, short time

⁵ needs; MS. nedysse

⁶ MS. feve (em. M.)

⁷ afraid; MS. afrayed.
(em. M.)

⁸ em. S.

Abraham. Cume up, swet son, onto my arme;

I must bynd thy handes too,
 Allthow thou be never soo myld.

Isaac. A, mercy, fader! wy schuld ze do soo?

Abraham. That thou schuldyst not let,¹ my chyld.

Isaac. Nay, iwysse, fader, I wyll not let zow;

Do on for me zowr wyll,
 And on the purpos that ze have set zow
 For Godes love kepe yt forthe styll.

I am full sory thys day to dey,²

But gyt I kepe³ not my God to greve;
 Do on zowr lyst⁴ for me hard[c]ly,
 My fayer swete fader, I zeffe zow leve.

But, fader, I prey zow evermore,

Tell ze my moder never a⁵ dell⁶;
 Yffe sche wist⁷ yt, sche wold wepe full sore,
 For iwysse, fader, sche lovyt[h] me wyllc⁸;

Goddes blyssyng have mot sche⁹!
 Now forwyll, my moder so swete,
 We too be leke¹⁰ no mor to mete.

Abraham. A, Ysaac, son¹¹! pou makyst me gret,¹²
 And with thy wordes¹³ dystempurst¹⁴ me.

Isaac. Swete¹⁵ fader, I am sory zow to greve¹⁶;

I cry zow mercy of that I have donne,
 And of all trespasse pat ever I ded meve¹⁷;

Now, fader,¹⁸ forgyffe me pat I have donne.

God of heven be with me!

¹ hinder

² die

³ wish, desire

⁴ pleasure

⁵ MS. no

⁶ part of

⁷ knew; MS. wost

⁸ MS. full wyllc

⁹ MS. not sche have (em. H.)

¹⁰ are likely

¹¹ MS. Ysaac, Ysaac

¹² lament, weep; MS. to gret

¹³ MS. wordes thou

¹⁴ troublest

¹⁵ MS. iwysse swete

¹⁶ MS. to greve zow

¹⁷ cause; MS. mete zow

¹⁸ MS. dere fader

Abraham. To don thys dede I am full sory,
But, Lord, thyn hest I wyll not withstond.

Isaac. A, Fader of hevyn, to the I crye,
Lord, reseyyve me into thy hond.¹

Abraham. Loo, now ys cum the tyme² certeyn

That my swerd³ in hys necke schall bite.⁴

A, Lord, my hart reysyth therageyn,⁵

I may not fynd⁶ in my harte to smygth —

My hart wyll not now thertoo.

Ȝyt fayn I woold warke my Lordes wyll;

But thys gowng innosent lygth so styll,

I may not fynd⁶ in my hart hym to kyll.

O, Fader of hevyn, what schall I doo?

Isaac. A, mercy, fader, wy⁷ tery ȝe so,

And let me ley thus longe on pis hethc?

Now I wold to God þe stroke were doo⁸!

I prey ȝow,⁹ schorte me of¹⁰ my woo,

And let me not loke thus after¹¹ my deth.¹²

Abraham. Now, hart, wy wilt thow not¹³ breke on thre?

Ȝyt schall þ[o]u not make me to God¹⁴ onmyld.¹⁵

I wyll no lenger let¹⁶ for the,

For that my God agrevyd wold be;

Now hoold¹⁷ the¹⁸ stroke, my owyn dere chyld.

*Her ABRAHAM drew hys stroke, and þe ANGELL toke
the swerd³ in hys hond soddenly.*

Angel. I am an angell, thow mayist se¹⁹ blythe,

That fro hevyn to the ys sent.²⁰

¹ MS. hand

² MS. the tyme cum

³ MS. sword

⁴ MS. synke (cm. II.)

⁵ against this

⁶ MS. fyndygh; M. fynd yt

⁷ why

⁸ done

⁹ MS. fader I prey ȝow hartely

¹⁰ shorten

¹¹ wait thus for

¹² MS. degth

¹³ MS. wolddyst not thou

¹⁴ MS. my God

¹⁵ ungracious (*lit.* unmild)

¹⁶ tarry

¹⁷ receive

¹⁸ MS. tha

¹⁹ see

²⁰ MS. senth

Owr Lord thanke[th] the an c sythe¹
 For the keypyng of hys commaw[nde]ment.

He knowyt[h] þi wyll and also thy harte,
 That thou dredyst hym above all thyng;
 5 And sum of thy hevynes for to departe,²
 A fayr ram gynder³ I gan brynge;

He standyth teyed, loo, among þe breres.
 Now, Abraham, amend thy mood,
 For Ysaac, thy zowng son þat her ys,
 10 Thys day [thow] schall not sched hys blood;

Goo, make thy sacryfece with zon rame.
 Now farwyll,⁴ blyssyd Abraham,
 For onto hevyn I goo now hom;

The way ys full gayn⁵ [to pace⁶];
 15 Take up thy son soo free.

[Exit.

Abraham. A, Lord, I thanke the of thy gret grace!
 Now am I teyed⁷ on dyvers wysse;
 Arysse up, Ysaac, my sunne,⁸ arysse;
 Arysse,⁹ swete chyld, and cum to me.

20 *Isaac.* A, mercy, fader! wy smygth ze nowt¹⁰?
 A, smygth on, fader, onys with zowr knyffe.

Abraham. Pesse, my swet son,¹¹ and take no thowt,
 For owr Lord of hevyn hath grant þi lyffe

Be hys angell now, that þou schalt not dey.¹²

25 *Isaac.* A, fader, full glad than wer I,

¹ a hundred times

² banish

³ yonder

⁴ MS. for-

⁵ near, straight

⁶ pass; em. H.

⁷ bound (to God); MS. yeyed

⁸ MS. dere sunne

⁹ MS. arysse up

¹⁰ MS. not yyt (em. H.)

¹¹ MS. sir (em. M.)

¹² MS. dey þis day sunne truly

Iwys, fader, I sey, iwys,
Yf thys tale wer trew!

Abraham. An hundryd tymys, my son fayer of hew,
For joy pi mowth now wyll I kys.

Isaac. A, my dere fader, Abraham,
Wyll not God be wroth þat we do thus?

Abraham. Noo, noo! swet¹ son, for gyn² same rame
He hath sent hether down to us.³

Ȝyn best schall dey here in pi sted,
In the worpschup⁴ of owr Lord alon;
Goo, fet⁵ hym hethyr, my chyld, inded.

Isaac. I⁶ wyll goo hent⁷ hym be the hed,
And bryng ȝon best with me anon.

[Isaac catches the ram.]

A, scheppe, scheppe, blyssyd mot þou be
That ever thou were sent down heder!
Thow schall thys day dey for me,
In the worchup of the holy Trynyte.
Now cum fast, and goo we togeder

To my fader in hy⁸;
Thow þou be never so jentyll and good,
Ȝyt had I lever thow schedyst pi blood,
Iwysse, scheppe, than I.

Loo! fader, I have browt here full smerte⁹
Thys jentyll scheppe, and to¹⁰ ȝow I ȝyffe;

¹ MS. swyt

² yon

³ MS.

Noo, noo! harly, my swyt son,
For ȝyn same rame he hath us sent

Hether down to us;

em. suggested by M.

⁴ MS. worpschup (em. S.)

⁵ fetch

⁶ MS. Fader I

⁷ seize

⁸ in haste; MS. of heven
(em. sugg. by M.)

⁹ promptly

¹⁰ MS. hym to

Lord¹ God, I thanke þe with all my hart,
For I am glad that I schall leve,²

And kys onys my dere moder.

5 *Abraham.* Now be ryght³ myry, my [owyne] swete ch
For thys qwyke best þat ys so myld
Here I present⁴ before all other.

10 *Isaac.* And I wyll fast begynne to blowe;
Thys fyer schall brene⁵ a full good sped.⁶
But, fader, wyll⁷ I stowppe downe lowe,
Ze wyll not kyll me with gowr swerd,⁸ I trowe?

Abraham. Noo, har[de]ly,⁹ swet son, have no dred,
My momyng¹⁰ ys past.

Isaac. I¹¹ woold þat swerd⁸ wer in a gled,¹²
For¹³ yt make[th]¹⁴ me full yll agast.

*Here ABRAHAM mad hys offryng, knelyng,
scyyng th*

15 *Abraham.* Now, Lord God of heven in Trynyte,
Allmyty God omnipotent,
My offeryng I make in the worchope of the,
And with thys qweke best I the present;
Lord, reseyyve thow myn intent,
20 As [thow]¹⁵ art God, and grownd¹⁶ of owr grace.

[*God speaks from hea*
God. Abraham, Abraham, wyll¹⁷ mot thow sped,¹⁸
And Ysaac, þi gowng son the by!

¹ MS. but Lord

² live

³ MS. rygth

⁴ MS. schall present

⁵ burn

⁶ speed; MS. spyd

⁷ while

⁸ MS. sword

⁹ certainly; em. M.

¹⁰ mourning

¹¹ MS. ȝa but I

¹² fire (?); MS. glad (em. M.)

¹³ MS. for iwys fac

¹⁴ em. suggested b

¹⁵ em. M.

¹⁶ foundation, sour

¹⁷ well

¹⁸ prosper

Truly, Abraham, for thys dede
I schall multiplye *ȝowr* bother¹ sede
As thyke as sterres be in the skye,

Bothe more and lesse ;
And as thyke as gravell in the see,
So² multiplyed *ȝowr* sede schall be ;
Thys grant I *ȝow* for *ȝowr* goodnesse.

Off *ȝow* schall cume frowte gret [*won*],³
And ever be in blysse withowt[en] end.⁴
For *ȝe* drede me as God alon,
And kepe my commawmentes everych⁵ on,
My blyssyng I *ȝeffe*, wersoever *ȝe* wend.⁶

Abraham. Loo, Ysaac, my son, how thynke *ȝe*
Be thys warke that we have wrought⁷ ?
Full glad and blythe we may be,
Aȝens Gods wyll⁸ *ȝat* we grucedd nott
Upon thys fayer heth.⁹

Isaac. A, fader, I thanke owr Lord every dell
That my wyt servyd me so wyll
For to drede God more than my deth.¹⁰

Abraham. Why ! dereworþy¹¹ son, wer thow adred ?
Hardely,¹² chyld, tell me thy lore.¹³

Isaac. *Ȝa*, be my feyth, fader, now have¹⁴ I red,¹⁵
I was never soo afrajd before

As I have byn at *ȝyn* hyll.
But, be my feyth, fader, I swere
I wyll nevermore cume there
But yt be aȝens my wyll.

¹ of you both; MS. *ȝowres* botheres

² MS. so thyke

³ plenty; em. M.

⁴ MS. *ȝynd*

⁵ MS. everysch

⁶ MS. goo (em. H.)

⁷ MS. wrought

⁸ MS. *ȝe* wyll of God

⁹ MS. hetth

¹⁰ MS. detth

¹¹ precious; MS. -wordy

¹² boldly, unhesitatingly

¹³ story, what is in thy mind

¹⁴ MS. hath (em. M.)

¹⁵ my senses

Abraham. Cum¹ on with me, my owyn swet sonn,
And homward fast now let us goon.

Isaac. Be² my feyth, fader, therto I on,³
I had never so good wyll hom to gon,⁴

And to speke with my dere moder.

Abraham. A! Lord of hevyn, I thanke the,
For now may I led hom with me
Ysaac, my zowunge sonn so fre,

The gentyllest chyld above all other⁵ —
Thys may I wyll avo[w to th]ec.⁶

Now goo we forthe, my blyssyd sonn.

Isaac. I grant, fader, and let us gon,
For, be my trowthe, wer I at home,
I wold never gon owt under that forme.⁷

I pray God zeffe us grace evermo,
And all tho⁸ that we be holdyng⁹ to.

[Exeun]

EPILOGUE

Enter DOCTOR

Doctor. Lo, sovereyns and sorys,¹⁰ now have we schewyd
Thys solom story¹² to grete and smale;
It ys good lernyng to lernd and lewyd¹³
And pe wysest of us all,

Wythowtyn ony berryng.¹⁴
For thys story schewyt[h]¹⁵ zowe [her]¹⁶

¹ MS. ga cum

² by

³ consent; MS. grant

⁴ MS. to gon hom

⁵ MS. erthe (em. S.)

⁶ MS. avoec

⁷ (?)

⁸ those; MS. thow

⁹ beholding

¹⁰ sirs

¹¹ MS. schowyd

¹² MS. story hath schowyd (em. H.)

¹³ ignorant

¹⁴ outcry, clamorous protest
(see *NED*, under *berere*, sl)

¹⁵ showeth; MS. schoyt

¹⁶ em. M.

How we schuld kepe, to owr po[we]re,¹
 Goddes commawments without grochyng.

Trowe ꝛe, sores, and ² God sent an angell [to ꝛow],
 And commawndyd ꝛow ꝛowr chyld to slayn,³
 Be ꝛowr trowthe, ys ther ony of ꝛow
 That eyther wold groche or stryve therageyn⁴?

How thyngke ꝛe now, sorys, therby?
 I trow ther be iij, or iiij, or moo.
 And thys⁵ women that wepe sorowfully
 Whan that hyr chyldryn dey them froo⁶ —

As nater woll⁷ and kynd —
 Yt ys but folly, I may well avow,⁸
 To groche aꝛens God or to greve ꝛow,
 For ꝛe schall never se hym myschevyd,⁹ I¹⁰ know,
 Be lond nor watyr, have thys in mynd;

And groche not aꝛens owr Lord God
 In welth or woo, wether¹¹ that he ꝛow send,
 Thow ꝛe be never so hard bestad;
 For when he wyll, he may yt amend,

Hys comawmentes yf¹² ꝛe kepe with good hart,
 As thys story hath now schewyd¹³ ꝛow befor[n]e,¹⁴
 And feytheffully serve hym qwyll¹⁵ ꝛe be qvart,¹⁶
 That ꝛe may plece God bothe evyn and morne.

Now Jesu, that weryd¹⁷ the crown of thorne,
 Bryng us all to hevyn blysse!
 Finis.

¹ em. M.

² if

³ MS. to smygth of ꝛowr
 childes hed (em. H.)

⁴ against this

⁵ these

⁶ die and leave them

⁷ MS. woll woll (em. S.)

⁸ MS. awooe

⁹ afflicted

¹⁰ MS. wyll I

¹¹ whichever

¹² MS. treuily yf

¹³ MS. schowyd

¹⁴ em. H.

¹⁵ while

¹⁶ healthy, sound

¹⁷ MS. weryd

THE YORK NATIVITY PLAY

The Earl of Ashburnham's manuscript (1430-1440), now MS. Brit. Mus. Add. 35,290, was edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith as *York Plays* (Oxford, 1885). Emendations are by Miss Smith (S.); Holthausen (H.), in Herrig's *Archiv* 85. 413; Kölbing (K.), in *Engl. Stud.* 20. 187. The stage-directions are modern. The form of the seven-line stanza should be noted: abab¹c²b¹c².

SCENE I

Bethlehem. A stable. Enter JOSEPH and MARY

Jos. Allweldand¹ God in Trinite,
I praye þe, Lord, for thy grete myght,
Unto thy symple servand see,
Here in þis place wher we are pight,²
Oureself allone;
Lord, graunte us gode herberow³ þis nyght
Within þis wone.⁴

For we haue sought both uppe and doune,
Thurgh diverse stretis in þis cite;
So mekill pepull is comen to towne,
þat we can nowhare herbered be,
Slike prees⁵ it is⁶;
Forsuthe I can no socoure see,
But belde⁷ with bestes.⁸

And yf we here all nyght abide,
We shall be stormed in þis steede⁹;
þe walles are doune on ilke a side,
þe ruffe is rayned¹⁰ aboven oure hede,
Als have I roo.¹¹
Say, Marie, doughtir, what is thy rede¹²?
How sall we doo?

¹ almighty
² pitched, settled
³ harbor, shelter
⁴ place, dwelling
⁵ such a crowd

⁶ MS. þer is slike prees
⁷ lodge
⁸ MS. belde us with þere
bestes (em. H., K.)
⁹ place

¹⁰ wet with ra
¹¹ rest, peace
¹² counsel

Now will be borne of my body

Both God and Man togedir in feere,¹

Bliste mott he be!

Jesu, my Son þat is so dere,

Now borne is he! — [M^{ARY} worships the child.]

Hayle, my Lord God! hayle, Prince of pees!

Hayle, my Fadir! and hayle, my Sone!

Hayle sovereyne Sege,² all synnes to sesse³!

Hayle, God and Man in erth to wonne⁴!

Hayle! thurgh whos myht

All þis worlde was first begonne,

Merknes and light.

Sone, as I sugett⁵ am of thyne,

Vowchesaffe, swete Sone, [for so] I pray þe,

That I myght þe take in armys myne,⁶

And in þis povre wede arraie⁷ þe.

Graunte me þi[s] blisse,

As I am thy modir chosen to be

In sothfastnesse.

SCENE II

Outside the stable. Enter JOSEPH

Jos. A, Lorde! what⁸ the wedir is colde!

þe fellest⁹ freese¹⁰ þat evere I felyd.

I pray God helpe þam þat is olde,¹¹

And namely¹² þam þat is vnwelde,¹³

So may I saie.

Now, gud God, pou be my belde,¹⁴

As pou best may.

[A sudden light shines.]

¹ together (redundant)

² seat, throne

³ cease

⁴ dwell

⁵ subject; MS. am sympill
sugett (K. omits sympill)

⁶ MS. þe armys of myne

⁷ MS. to araie

⁸ how

⁹ cruelest

¹⁰ frost

¹¹ MS. alde

¹² especially

¹³ weak

¹⁴ shelter; MS. brilde
(em. S.)

A, Lord God! what light is þis
 þat comes shynyng þus sodenly?
 I can not saie, als have I blisse.
 When I come home unto Marie,
 þan sall I spirre.¹

[Exit. 5]

SCENE III

Within the stable. Enter JOSEPH to MARY

[Jos.] A! here[d]² be God, for nowe come I.
 Mar. Ze ar welcum, sirre.

Jos. Say, Marie doghtir, what chere with þe?

Mar. Right goode, Joseph, as has been ay.

Jos. What³ swete thyng is þat on thy kne?

10

Mar. It is my Sone, þe soth to saye,
 þat is so gud.

Jos. Wele is me I bade⁴ þis day
 To se þis Foode⁵!

Me merveles mekill of þis light,
 þat þusgates⁶ shynes in þis place,
 Forsuth it is a selcouth⁷ sight!

15

Mar. þis hase he ordand⁸ of his grace,
 My Sone so zing,

A starne⁹ to be shynyng a space
 At his bering.¹⁰

20

For Balam tolde ful longe beforne
 How þat a sterne shulde rise full hye,¹¹
 And of a maiden shulde be borne¹²

¹ ask, inquire² em. K.³ MS. O Marie what (em. H.)⁴ awaited⁵ child (*lit.*, one fed)⁶ thus⁷ strange, unusual⁸ ordained⁹ star¹⁰ birth¹¹ Num. 24. 17¹² Isa. 7. 14

A Sone¹ þat sall oure saffying² be
Fro caris kene.
Forsuth it is my Sone so free
Whame he gan mene.³

5 *Jos.* Nowe welcome, Floure fairest of hewe!
I shall þe menske⁴ with mayne and myght.
Hayle, my Maker! hayle, Crist Jesu!
Hayle, riall⁵ Kyng, Roote of all right!
Hayle, Saveour!
10 Hayle, my Lorde, Lemer⁶ of light!
Hayle, blessid Floure!

Mar. Nowe, Lord, þat all þis worlde schall wynn
To þe, my Sone, is þat I saye,
Here is no bedde to laye the inne,
15 þerfore, my dere Sone, I þe praye,
Sen it is so,
Here in þis cribbe I myght þe lay
Betweene bestis⁷ two.

20 And I sall happe⁸ þe, myn owne dere Childe,
With such clothes as we have here.

Jos. Marie,⁹ beholde þes beestis mylde,
They make lovyng in ther manere
As þei wer men;
Forsothe it semes wele be ther chere¹⁰
25 þare Lord þei ken.¹¹

Mar. Ther Lorde þai kenne, þat wate I were
They worshippe hym with myght and mayne.
The wedir is colde, as ye may fele;

¹ MS. sonne

² salvation

³ mean; MS. be whame Balam
gon mene (em. H.)

⁴ worship

⁵ royal

⁶ flasher forth

⁷ MS. þer bestis (em. H., K.)

⁸ wrap

⁹ MS. O Marie

¹⁰ look

¹¹ know, recogni

To halde¹ hym warme þei are full fayne
 With þare warme breth,
 And oondis² on hym. Is noght to layne³
 To warme hym with?

Nowe⁴ slepis my Sone, blist mot he be!
 And lyes full warme þer bestis bytwene.

Jos. Nowe⁴ is fulfilled, forsuth I see,
 Þat Abacuc in mynde gon mene,
 By⁵ prophicie:

He saide oure Savyoure shall be sene
 Betwene bestis lye;

And nowe I see þe same in sight.

Mar. Ȝa, sir, forsuth þe same is he.

Jos. Honnoure and worshippe both day and nyght,
 Aylastand Lorde, be done to þe,
 As⁶ is worthy!

And to⁷ thy service I oblissh⁸ me
 With herte⁹ holy.

Mar. þou mercyfull Maker most myghty,
 My God, my Lorde, my Sone so free,
 Thy handemayden forsoth am I,
 And to thi service I oblissh me,
 With herte⁹ entere.¹⁰

Thy blissing, [now], beseke I thee,
 Graunte¹¹ us in¹² feere.

¹ keep	⁵ MS. and preched by (em. K.)	⁹ MS. all myn herte (em. K.)
² breathe	⁶ MS. all way as (em. K.)	¹⁰ entire, whole
³ borrow	⁷ MS. lord to (em. K.)	¹¹ MS. þou graunte (em. K.)
⁴ MS. O nowe (em. K.)	⁸ oblige me, bind myself	¹² MS. all in (em. K.)

8. Abacuc: the allusion is to the apocryphal Pseudo-Matthew, chap. 14, which reads: 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Habakkuk the prophet, who said, Between two animals thou art made known.' The reference here is to Hab. 3. 2, where the Septuagint version reads: 'Thou shalt be known between the two living creatures.'

THE SECOND TOWNELEY SHEPHERDS' PLAY (SECUNDA PASTORUM)

Gayley thus characterizes this piece (*Plays of our Forefathers*, p. 182): 'The Wakefield *Secunda* . . . is plot within plot, developed through eight closely consecutive scenes, and crowded with action. The comic adventure is indeed but an episode—this "sheep stealing of Mak"—but it has its beginning, middle, and end; the motive, the devices, and the progress of a comediotta in itself. It grows out of and belongs to the conditions with which the enveloping action opens, and its party of the second part are also dramatic persons in the main action. . . . As a work of dramatic genius this little play, with its home-made philosophy, home-made figures, and home-made humor, with its comic business, its sometimes boisterous spirits, its quiet and shrewd irony, its ludicrous diction, its revelation of rural manners, its simple and healthful creed, its radiant and naïve devoutness, its dramatic anticipations, postponements, and surprises, stands out English and alone, and a masterpiece.' The three shepherds he thus describes (pp. 182-3): 'Coll, the first shepherd, who soliloquizes concerning political philosophy, a kind of later fourteenth-century populist whom it refreshes to grumble; . . . Gyb, the second shepherd, whose vein is of matrimonial philosophy; . . . and Day, the hind, whose philosophy is eclectic, who swears by the unborn Christ and Saint Nicholas, and "lets the world pass." He it is who sees "sudden sights in the darkness"; who warns of the midnight-stalking Mak; who makes that "Yoman" of the king lie safely down between them; it is he, too, who dreams of the stolen sheep, and conducts the vain search therefor; and who, fortunately flinging back to Mak's home to give the hypothetical babe, "that little day starne," a "saxpence," lifts up the clout and diagnoses the fraud that has been practised upon them.' According to Pollard (*English Minstrel Plays*, p. 189), Mak is probably adapted from the favorite comic character, the conjurer and buffoon Maugis, of the romance of the *Four Sons of Aymon*. Pollard's general estimate is (England's edition, p. xxx): 'The *Secunda Pastorum* . . . is really perfect as a work of art.'

The play is written, like four others in the Towneley series—*Noah*, *Prime Pastorum*, *Herod*, and the *Buffeting*—and parts of others (cf. Pollard's remarks in England's edition, pp. xxi ff.; Gayley, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 ff.) in a nine-line stanza rhyming $aaaa^4b^1ccc^2b^1$, where the superior numbers denote the number of feet in the line (the a-lines have each four feet, for instance). In reality, however, there are four rhymes to the stanza, instead of three, since each of the a-lines has a rhyme in the middle; the scheme may therefore be represented thus (cf. Pollard, p. xxii): $ababab^2c^1ddd^2c^1$. All the stanzas save one (535 14 ff.) are constructed on this model, and that has lost two of the four opening lines.

Not to mention earlier editions, the play was printed in 1897 by England (*The Towneley Plays*, E.E.T.S. Ex. Ser., No. 71, pp. 116-40), and by Manly

In stormes and tempest —
 Now in the eest, now in the west.
 Wo is hym has never rest

Mydday nor morow !

Bot we sely¹ husbandys² that walkys on the moore,
 In fayth we are nerehandys outt of the doore.³
 No wonder, as it standys, if we be poore,
 Ffor the tylthe⁴ of oure landys lyys falow as the floore,

As ye ken.

We ar so lamyd,⁵

Ffortaxed⁶ and ramyd,⁷

We ar mayde handtamyd⁸

With⁹ thyse gentlery-men.¹⁰

Thus thay refe¹¹ us oure rest — oure Lady theym wary¹² !

These men that ar lord-fest,¹³ thay cause the ploghe tary.

That¹⁴ men say is for the best, we fynde it contrary ;

Thus ar husbandys opprest, in po[i]nte to¹⁵ myscary

On lyfe.

Thus hold thay us hunder,

Thus thay bryng us in blonder¹⁶ ;

It were greatte wonder

And¹⁷ ever shuld we thryfe.

Ther¹⁸ shall com a swa[y]ne¹⁹ as prowde as a po²⁰ ;

He must borow my wa[y]ne,²¹ my ploghe also ;

Then I am full fa[y]ne²² to graunt or²³ he go.

Thus lyf we in payne, anger, and wo,

By nyght and day ;

¹ helpless, miserable

² husbandmen (see l. 17) ;

MS. shepardes (em. suggested by M.)

³ nearly homeless

⁴ surface (?) (there is arable land among the moors)

⁵ MS. hamyd (em. H.)

⁶ overtaxed

⁷ oppressed

⁸ reduced to submission

⁹ by

¹⁰ gentry

¹¹ take from

¹² curse

¹³ bound to a lord

¹⁴ what

¹⁵ in peril of ; em. E.

¹⁶ confusion, trouble

¹⁷ if

¹⁸ MS. transposes this stanza and the next (em. K.)

¹⁹ swain

²⁰ peacock

²¹ wagon

²² MS. swane, wane, fane (em. K.)

²³ ere

Som ar wo that has any,
Bot so far [as] can¹ I,
Wo is hym that has many,
Ffor he felys sore.

Bot, yong men, of² wowyng, for God that you boght,
Be well war³ of wedyng, and thynk in youre thoght:
'Had I wyst⁴' is a thyng it servys of noght.
Mekyll styll mowrnyng has wedyng home broght,
And grefys,
With many a sharp showre;
Ffor thou may cach in an owre
That shall [savour]⁵ fulle sowre
As long as thou lyffys.

Ffor — as ever red I pystyll ⁶! — I have oone to my fere ⁷
As sharp as a thystyll, as rugh as a brere;
She is browyd ⁸ lyke a brystyll, with a sowre-loten ⁹ chere ¹⁰;
Had she oones wett hyr whystyll, she couth syng full clere
Hyr Pater Noster.

She is as greatt as a whall¹¹;
 She has a galon of gall;
 By hym that dyed for us all,
 I wald I had ryn¹² to¹³ I had lost hir¹⁴!

Coll. 'God looke over the raw¹⁶!' Ffull desfly¹⁶ ye stand!
Gib. Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tariant¹⁷!
 Sagh thou awre¹⁸ of Daw?

Coll. Yee, on a ley¹⁰ land
Hard I hym blaw. He commys here at hand,
Not far,

I know

2 as to

¶ beware well

4 known

5 cm. E.

① epistle

for my mate

8 has brows

9 sour-looking

10 expression

11 whale

12 run

13 till

14 'I wald I had lost hir' would
be more metrical

15 row

16 deaf

17 tarrying

¹⁸ anywhere; MS. awro (see *NED.* s.v. *owhere*)

19 fallow, unplowed

Lord, thyse winds¹ ar spytus,² and the weders³ full kene,
And the frostys so hydus⁴ thay water myn ceyne —

No ly.⁵

Now in dry, now in wete,

Now in snaw, now in slete;

When my shone⁶ freys to my fete,

It is not all esy.

Bot as far as I ken, or yit as I go,

We sely wedmen⁷ dre⁸ mekyll wo,

We have sorow then and then, it fallys oft so.

Sely Capyle, oure hen, both to and fro

She kakyls,

Bot begyn she to crok,

To groyne,⁹ or [to clo]k,¹⁰

Wo is hym¹¹ oure cok,

Ffor he is in the shakyls¹²!

These men that ar wed have not all thare wyll;

When they ar full hard sted,¹³ thay sygh full styll;

God wayte¹⁴ thay ar led full hard and full yll;

In bower nor in bed thay say noght thertyll

This tyde.

My parte have I fun,¹⁵

I know my lesson:

Wo is hym that is bun,¹⁶

Ffor he must abyde.¹⁷

Bot now late in oure lyfys (a mervell to me,

That I thynk my hart ryfys¹⁸ sich wonders to see —

What that destany dryfys it shuld so be!)

Som men wyll have two wyfys, and som men thre

In store!

¹ MS. weders (em. suggested by M.)

² spiteful

³ storms

⁴ hideous

⁵ lie

⁶ shoes

⁷ See line 17, below

⁸ endure, suffer

⁹ grumble

¹⁰ em. E.

¹¹ MS. hym is of (em. suggested by M.)

¹² shackles, bonds of wedlock; MS. shekyls

¹³ beset

¹⁴ knows

¹⁵ found

¹⁶ bound

¹⁷ stay as he is

¹⁸ is riven asunder

Som ar wo that has any,
 Bot so far [as] can ¹ I,
 Wo is hym that has many,
 Ffor he felys sore.

Bot, yong men, of ² wowyng, for God that you boght,
 Be well war ³ of wedyng, and thynk in youre thoght:
 'Had I wyst ⁴' is a thyng it servys of noght.
 Mekyll styll mowrnyng has wedyng home broght,
 And grefys,

With many a sharp showre;
 Ffor thou may cach in an owre
 That shall [savour] ⁵ fulle sowre
 As long as thou lyffys.

Ffor — as ever red I pystyll ⁶! — I have oone to my fere ⁷
 As sharp as a thystyll, as rugb as a brere;
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 Had she oones wett hyr whystyll, she couth syng full clere
 Hyr Pater Noster.

She is as greatt as a whall ¹¹;
 She has a galon of gall;
 By hym that dyed for us all,
 I wald I had ryn ¹² to ¹³ I had lost hir ¹⁴!

Coll. 'God looke over the raw ¹⁵!' Ffull defly ¹⁶ ye stand!

Gib. Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tarian ¹⁷!

Sagh thou awre ¹⁸ of Daw?

Coll. Yee, on a ley ¹⁹ land

Hard I hym blaw. He commys here at hand,
 Not far,

¹ know

² as to

³ beware well

⁴ known

⁵ em. E.

⁶ epistle

⁷ for my mate

⁸ has brows

⁹ sour-looking

¹⁰ expression

¹¹ whale

¹² run

¹³ till

¹⁴ 'I wald I had lost hir' would

be more metrical

¹⁵ row

¹⁶ deaf

¹⁷ tarrying

¹⁸ anywhere; MS. awro (see
NED. s.v. owhere)

¹⁹ fallow, unplowed

Stand styll.

Gib. Qwhy?

Coll. Ffor he commys, hope I.

Gib. He wyll make us both a ly¹

Bot-if we be war.²

Enter DAW, the Third Shepherd. At first he thinks himself alone

Daw. Crystys crosse me spede and Sant Nycholas!

Therof had I nede, it is wars then it was.

Whoso couthe take hede and lett the world pas,

It is ever in drede, and brekyll³ as glas,

And slythys.⁴

This world fowre⁵ never so,

With mervels mo and mo —

Now in weyll,⁶ now in wo,

And all thyng wrythys.⁷

Was never syn Noe⁸ floode sich floodys seyn,

Wyndys and ranys so rude, and stormes so keyn —

Som stamerd, som stod in dowte, as I weyn.

Now God turne all to good! I say as I mene,

Ffor ponder:

These floodys so thay drowne,

Both in feyldys and in towne,

And berys all downe,

And that is a wonder! [*Catches sight of the others.*

We that walk on the nyghtys, oure catell to kepe,

We se sodan syghtys, when othere men slepe.

Yit me thynk my hart lyghtys,⁹ I se shrewys¹⁰ pepe.

[*Still soliloquizing.*

Ye ar two [t]all¹¹ wyghtys — I wyll gyff my shepe

A turne.

¹ lie

² wary

³ brittle

⁴ slides

⁵ fared

⁶ weal

⁷ turns, changes

⁸ Noah's

⁹ grows light

¹⁰ rascals

¹¹ em. Kittredge

— Bot full yll have I ment¹:

As I walk on this bent,²

I may lyghtly repent,

My toes if I spurne.³

[*He first addresses COLL, then his master, GIB.*

A, sir, God you save, and master myne!

— A drynk fayn wold I have, and somewhat to dyne.

Coll. Crystys curs, my knave, thou art a ledyr⁴ hyne⁵!

Gib. What, the boy lyst rave! Abyde unto syne⁶;

We have made⁷ it.

Yll thryft on thy pate!

Though the shrew cam late,

Yit is he in state

To dyne, if he had it.

Daw. Sich servandys as I, that swettys and swynkys,⁸

Etys oure brede full dry, and that me forthynkys.⁹

We ar oft weytt and wery when master-men wynkys,¹⁰

Yit commys full lately¹¹ both dyners and drynkys.

Bot nately¹²

Both oure dame and oure syre,

When we have ryn in the myre,

Thay can nyp¹³ at oure hyre,

And pay us full lately.

Bot here my trouth, master, for the fayr¹⁴ that ye make,

I shall do therafter¹⁵ — wyrk as I take;

I shall do a lytyll, sir, and emang¹⁶ ever lake,¹⁷

Ffor yit lay my soper never on my stomake

In feyldys.

¹ planned (to visit the sheep,
since he may stumble in
the dark)

² heath, open field

³ stub

⁴ worthless

⁵ hind

⁶ wait till later

⁷ finished; MS. mayde

⁸ toil

⁹ grieves

¹⁰ sleep

¹¹ reluctantly, after the
proper time

¹² to some purpose, thoroughly

¹³ take away bits

¹⁴ wages

¹⁵ in proportion

¹⁶ the whole time

¹⁷ be lacking

Wherto shuld I threpe¹?
 With my staf can I lepe,
 And men say, 'Lyght chepe'²
 Letherly³ foryeldys.⁴

5 *Coll.* Thou were an yll lad to ryde on⁵ wowyng
 With a man that had bot lytyll of spendyng.
Gib. Peasse, boy, I bad! — no more jangling,
 Or I shall make the full rad,⁶ by the hevens Kyng,
 With thy gawdys⁷!

10 Wher ar oure shepe, boy, we skorne⁸?
Daw. Sir, this same day at morne
 I thaym left in the corne,
 When thay rang lawdys⁹;

They have pasture good, thay can not go wrong.

15 *Coll.* That is right, by the roode! thyse nyghtys ar long;
 Yit I wold, or we yode,¹⁰ oone gaf us a song.

Gib. So I thocht as I stode — to myrth us emong.¹¹

Daw. I grauntt.

Coll. Lett me syng the tenory.

20 *Gib.* And I the tryble so hye.

Daw. Then the meyne¹² fallys to me;
 Lett se how you chauntt.

[*They*

*Enter MAK, with a cloak thrown over his tunic*¹³

Mak. Now, Lord, for thy naymes vii, that made both moyn and star
 Well mo then I can neven,¹⁴ thi will, Lorde, of me tharnys¹⁵;

25 I am all uneven¹⁶ — that moves oft my harnes¹⁷;
 Now wold God I were in heven, for the[re]¹⁸ wepe no barnes¹⁹
 So styll!

¹ complain

² easy bargain

³ badly

⁴ repays

⁵ a-

⁶ frightened

⁷ gawdys

⁸ (?)

⁹ lauds (before daybreak)

¹⁰ before we went

¹¹ to gladden us the while

¹² middle part

¹³ MS. Tunc intrat Mak, in clamide

¹⁴ name

¹⁵ lacks

¹⁶ at odds, at sixes and sevens

¹⁷ brains

¹⁸ em. E.

¹⁹ children

Coll. Who is that pypys so poore?

Mak. Wold God ye wyst how I soore¹!

[*Coll.*²] Lo, a man that walkys on the moore,
And has not all his wyll!

Gib. Mak, where has thou gon³? Tell us tythyng.⁴

Daw. Is he comen? Then ylk on take hede to his thyng.⁵

[*Snatches his own cloak from Mak.*⁶

Mak. What! Ich be a yoman, I tell you, of the king.

[*Pretending not to know them.*

The self and the same, sond⁷ from a greatt lordyng,
And sich.⁸

Ffy on you! Goyth hence

10

Out of my presence!

I must have reverence —

Why, who be Ich?

Coll. Why make ye it so qwaynt,⁹ Mak? Ye do wrang.

Gib. Bot, Mak, lyst ye saynt¹⁰? I trow that ye lang.¹¹

15

Daw. I trow the shrew¹² can paynt,¹³ the dewyll myght hym hang!

Mak. Ich shall make complaynt, and make you all to thwang,¹⁴

At a worde,

And tell evyn¹⁵ how ye doth.

Coll. Bot, Mak, is that sothe?

20

Now take outt that sothren¹⁶ tothe,

And sett in a torde¹⁷!

Gib. Mak, the dewill in youre ee! A stroke wold I leyne¹⁸ you.

Daw. Mak, know ye not me? By God, I couthe teyn¹⁹ you.

Mak. God looke²⁰ you all thre! Me thoght I had sene you.

25

[*As if recognizing them.*

¹ lared

² em. Child

³ MS. gom (em. E.)

⁴ news

⁵ property

⁶ MS. & accipit clamidem

ab ipso

⁷ messenger

⁸ so forth

⁹ do you behave so strangely

¹⁰ play the saint

¹¹ are restless (love change?)

¹² rascal

¹³ deceive

¹⁴ to be whipped

¹⁵ exactly

¹⁶ southern (Child under-stands 'deceitful')

¹⁷ piece of dung

¹⁸ lend

¹⁹ trouble

²⁰ bless

Ye ar a fare compane.

Coll. Can ye now mene you¹?

Gib. Shrew, jape²!

Thus late as thou goys,

What wyll men suppos?

And thou has an yll noys³

Of stelyng of shepe.

Mak. And I am trew as steyll, all men waytt⁴;

Bot a sekenes I feyll that haldys⁵ me full haytt⁶;

My belly farys not weyll, it is out of astate.

Daw. 'Seldom lyys the dewyll dede by the gate.'

Mak. Therfor

Full sore am I and yll,

If I stande stone-styll.

I ete not an nedyll⁷

Thys moneth and more.

Coll. How farys thi wyff? By my hoode, how farys sho?

Mak. Lyys walteryng,⁸ by the roode, by the fyere, lo!

And a howse full of brude⁹; she drynkys well, to.

Yll spede othere good that she wyll do!

Bot s[h]o¹⁰

Etys as fast as she can;

And ilk yere that commys to man

She bryngys furth a lakan,¹¹

And, som yeres, two.

Bot were I not more gracy[o]us,¹² and rythere be¹³ far,

I were¹⁴ eten outt of howse and of harbar¹⁵;

Yit is she a fowll dowse,¹⁶ if ye com nar;

Ther is none that trowse nor knowys a war¹⁷

Then ken I.

1 remember
2 make jokes
3 reputation
4 know
5 keeps
6 hot

7 particle, bit
8 rolling about
9 brood, children
10 em. H.
11 baby (*lit.* toy)
12 prosperous

13 by
14 should be
15 shelter
16 doxy
17 worse

Now wyll ye se what I profer :

To gyf all in my cofer

To-morne at next¹ to offer

Hyr hed-maspenny.²

Coll. I am cold and nakyd, and wold have a fyere.

Gib. I wote so forwakyd³ is none in this shyre !

I wold slepe if⁴ I takyd les to my hyere.⁵

Daw. I am wery, forrakyd,⁶ and run in the myre —

Wake thou !

Gib. Nay, I wyll lyg downe by,

Ffor I must slepe truly.

Daw. As good a mans son was I

As any of you.⁷

Bot, Mak, com heder ! betwene shall thou lyg downe.

Mak. Then myght I lett⁸ you bedene⁹ of that ye wold rowne.¹⁰ 15

No drede.

[*He says his prayers.*

' Ffro my top to my too,

¹ at length (?)

² funeral dues (see 622)

³ weary with waking

⁴ even if

⁵ hire

⁶ worn out with walking

⁷ Two lines are apparently
lost here

⁸ hinder

⁹ completely

¹⁰ whisper

5. *Coll.* : MS. gives this line to Daw, and makes it follow Gib's next speech ; but Gib's speech requires Daw's next as an immediate answer.

8. *Daw.* : MS. assigns this to Coll, but Daw and his master, Gib, are having a dispute as to who shall keep awake.

17. In the *Prima Pastorum* (290-5), one of the shepherds says, as they prepare to lie down :

Ffor ferde we be fryht, a crosse let us kest :

' Cryst-crosse, benedyght eest and west,

Ffor drede.

Jesus onazorus,

Crucyefixus,

Morcus, Andreus,

God be oure spede !'

Cf. the blessing in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* 292-300 :

Therwith the nightspel seyde he anonrightes

On foure halves of the hous aboute,

And on the threshold of the dore withoute :

' Jesu Crist, and sēynt Benedight,

Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,

For nightes verye, the white *Pater Noster* !

Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster ?'

*Manus tuas commendo,*¹

Poncio Pilato;

Cryst-crosse me spede!

[*While the Shepherds sleep on, he rises.*²

Now were tyme for a man that lakkys what he wold

To stalk prevely than unto a fold,

And neemly³ to wyrk than, and be not to bold,

Ffor he might aby⁴ the bargan, if it were told

At the endyng.

Now were tyme for to reyll⁵;

Bot he nedys good counsell

That fayn wold fare weyll,

And has bot lytyll spendyng.⁶ [*He works a spell.*

Bot abowte you a serkyll,⁷ as rownde as a moyn,⁸

Kest⁹ now¹⁰ I wyll, tyll that it be noyn,

That ye lyg stone-styll to that I have doyne;

And I shall say thertyll of good wordys a foyne¹¹:

'On hight,

Over youre heydys, my hand I lyft.

Outt go youre een! fordo¹² your syght! —

Bot yit I must make better shyft,

And¹³ it be right.

Lord, what¹⁴ thay slepe hard! — that may ye all here.

Was I never a shepard, bot now wyll I lere¹⁵;

If the flok be skard,¹⁶ yit shall I nyp¹⁷ nere.

How! drawes hederward! Now mendys oure chere

Ffrom¹⁸ sorow;

¹ Cf. Luke 23. 46

² MS. Tunc surgit, pastoribus dormientibus, & dicit:

³ nimbly

⁴ atone for

⁵ ramble

⁶ money to spend

⁷ circle (a magician's imaginary circle)

⁸ *ey* phonetically = *o* in this text

⁹ cast (see note on 535 17)

¹⁰ MS. to I have done that;

but this seems to have

been anticipated from

next line by some scribe

¹¹ few

¹² destroy

¹³ if

¹⁴ how

¹⁵ learn

¹⁶ frightened

¹⁷ steal up

¹⁸ MS. (ffron em. E.)

A fatt shepe, I dar say!

A good flese, dar I lay!¹

Eftwhyte² when I may,

Bot this will I borow.

[Exit with the sheep.]

SCENE II

MAK'S cottage. Enter MAK

[Mak.] How, Gyll, art thou in? Gett us som lyght.

Gill. Who makys sich dyn this tyme of the nyght?

I am sett for to spyn, I hope not I myght

Ryse a penny to wyn,³ I shrew⁴ them on hight⁵!

So farys

A huswyff that has bene —

To be rasyd⁶ thus betwene,⁷

Here may no note⁸ be sene,

Ffor⁹ sich small charys.¹⁰

Mak. Good wyff, open the hek¹¹! Seys thou not what I bryng?

Gill. I may thole¹² the dray¹³ the snek.¹⁴ A, com in, my swetyng!

Mak. Yee, thou thar¹⁵ not rek of¹⁶ my long standyng.

[Reproachfully.]

Gill. By the nakyd nek art thou lyke for to hyng.

Mak. Do way¹⁷!

I am worthy my mete,

Ffor, in a strate,¹⁸ can I gett

More then thay that swynke and swette

All the long day.

[Shows GILL the sheep.]

Thus it fell to my lott, Gyll, I had sich grace.¹⁹

Gill. It were a fowll blott to be hanged for the case.

¹ wager

² return, repay

³ I do not expect that I could
gain a penny by rising

⁴ curse

⁵ aloud, openly

⁶ rushed

⁷ ever and anon

⁸ work (i.e. completed task)

⁹ because of

¹⁰ jobs

¹¹ inner door

¹² suffer

¹³ to draw

¹⁴ latch

¹⁵ need

¹⁶ care about

¹⁷ get along

¹⁸ at a pinch

¹⁹ luck

Mak. I have skapyd, Jelott,¹ oft as hard a glase.²

Gill. 'Bot so long goys the pott to the water,' men says,
'At last

Comys it home broken.'

5 *Mak.* Well knowe I the token,
Bot let it never be spoken! —

Bot com and help fast.

I wold he were slayn, I lyst well etc³;

This twelmo[n]the⁴ was I not so fayn of oone shepe-mete.⁵

10 *Gill.* Com thay or⁶ he be slayn, and here the shepe blete —

Mak. Then myght I be tane. That were a cold swette!

Go spar⁷

The gaytt⁸ doore.

Gill. Yis, Mak.

15 *Ffor* and thay com at thy bak —

Mak. Then myght I far, by⁹ all the pak,

The dewill of the war.¹⁰

Gill. A good bowrde¹¹ have I spied, syn thou can¹² none:

Here shall we hym hyde, to¹³ thay be gone,

20 In my credyll.¹⁴ — Abyde¹⁵! Lett me alone! —

And I shall lyg besyde in chyl[d]bed, and grone.

Mak. Thou red,¹⁶

And I shall say thou was lyght¹⁷

Of a knave¹⁸ childe this nyght.

25 *Gill.* Now well is me day¹⁹ bright

That ever was I bred!

This is a good gyse,²⁰ and a far[c] cast,²¹

Yit a woman[s] avyse helpys at the last.

¹ French form of 'Gill' (?)

² rub, swipe, plight (*lit.* blow)

³ greatly desire to eat

⁴ em. K.

⁵ meal of mutton

⁶ ere

⁷ fasten

⁸ outer

⁹ fare, at the hands of; MS.

by for (em. Skeat, Loge-
man)

¹⁰ the devil the worse, a devil-
ish deal worse

¹¹ jest

¹² knowest

¹³ until

¹⁴ cradle

¹⁵ wait

¹⁶ make ready

¹⁷ delivered

¹⁸ boy

¹⁹ the day

²⁰ way

²¹ clever contrivance

I wote never who spyse : agane go thou fast.

Mak. Bot ¹ I com ² or thay ryse, els blowes a cold blast I

I wyll go slepe.

Yit slepys all this meneye,⁶

And I shall go stalk prevely,

As it had never bene I

That caryed thare shepe.

SCENE III

The moors near Horbury

Enter COLL, GIB, DAW, and MAK

Coll. *Resurrex a mortuis!* have hald my hand I

Judas carnas dominus! I may not well stand.

My foytt slepys, by Jesus I and I water-fastand.⁴

I thought that we layd us full nere Yngland.

Gib. A! ye!

Lord, what I have slept weyll!

As fresh as an eyll⁵;

As lyght I me feyll⁶

As leyfe on a tre!

Daw. Benste⁷ he herein! So my body⁸ qwakys

My hart is outt of skyn, what so it makys.

Who makys all this dyn? So my browes blakys,⁹

To the dowore¹⁰ wyll I wyn. Harke, felows, wakys!

We were fowre;

Se ye awre¹¹ of Mak now?

Coll. We were up or thou.

Gib. Man, I gyf God avowe

Yit yede¹² he na owre.¹³

¹ unless

² reach there

³ company

⁴ fasting on water

⁵ eel

⁶ feel myself

⁷ a blessing

⁸ MS. illegible; E., H. hart;

Kittredge, M. body

⁹ grow black

¹⁰ door

¹¹ anywhere

¹² were

¹³ nowhere. MS. noutre

Daw. Me thoght he was lapt in a wolfe-skyn.

Coll. So are many hapt now, namely¹ within.

*Daw.*² When we had long napt, me thoght with a gyn³

A fatt shepc he trapt, bot he mayde no dyn.

*Gib.*⁴ Be styll,

Thi dreame makys the woode⁵;

It is bot fantom, by the roode!

Coll. Now God turne all to good,

If it be his wyll.

Gib. Ryse, Mak, for shame! Thou lygys right lang.

Mak. Now, Crystys holy name be us emang!

What is this? For Sant Jame, I may not well gang!

I trow I be the same. A, my nek has lygen wrang

Enoghe!

Mekill thank! Syn yistereven,

Now, by Sant Stevyn,⁶

I was flayd⁷ with a swevyn,⁸

My hart out ofsloghe.⁹

I thoght Gyll began to crok, and travell¹⁰ full sad,

Wel ner¹¹ at the fyrst cok, of a yong lad

Ffor to mend oure flok; then be I never glad —

I have tow on my rok more then ever I had.

A, my heede!

A house full of yong tharmes!

The dewill knok outt thare barnes¹²!

Wo is hym has many barnes,

And therto lytyll brede!

¹ especially

² MS. ii pastor (em. M.)

³ snare, trap

⁴ MS. iii pastor (em. M.)

⁵ mad

⁶ MS. strevyn (em. H.)

⁷ tormented

⁸ dream

⁹ which smote my heart out (?)

¹⁰ travail

¹¹ well nigh

¹² brains

22. rok: distaff; the phrase means 'business to attend to' (cf. Chaucer, *Miller's Tale* 588 (A 3774), and Skeat's note).

24. tharmes: children (*lit.* bowels, Lat. *viscera*; cf. Ovid, *Met.* S. 478; Shakespeare, *M. for M.* 3. 1. 29).

I must go home, by youre lefe, to Gyll, as I thocht,

I pray you looke¹ my slefe,² that I steyll noght;

I am loth you to grefe, or from you take oght.

[Exit MAK.]

Daw. Go furth, yll myght thou chefe³! Now wold I we soght

This morne

That we had all oure store.

Coll. Bot I will go before.

Let us mete.

Gib.

Whore?

Daw.

At the crokyd thorne.

SCENE IV

MAK's cottage. MAK enters

Mak. Undo this doore! Who is here? How long shall I stand?

Gill. Who makys sich a bere⁴? Now walk in the wenyand.

Mak. A, Gyll, what chere? It is I, Mak, youre husbände.

Gill. Then may we se⁵ here the dewill in a bande,⁶

Syr Gyle⁷!

Lo, he commys with a lote⁸

As he were holden in the throte.

I may not syt at my note⁹

A handlang-while¹⁰!

Mak. Wyll ye here what fare she makys to gett hir a glose¹¹?

And dos noght bot lakys,¹² and clowse¹³ hir toose.

Gill. Why, who wanders? Who wakys? Who commys? Who gose?

Who brewys? Who bakys? What makys me thus hose¹⁴?

And than

¹ look in

² sleeve

³ prosper

⁴ noise, clamor

⁵ MS. be (em. Kittredge)

⁶ bond, chain

⁷ Cf. p. 529, note 9

⁸ voice

⁹ work

¹⁰ an instant

¹¹ pretext

¹² amuse herself

¹³ strokes, caresses

¹⁴ hoarse

10. crokyd thorne: perhaps the Shepherds' Thorn of Mapplewell, three miles northwest of Barnsley, and distant about eight miles from Horbury (see England's ed., p. xiv).

13. wenyand: waning of the moon, i.e. unlucky time (cf. *wanton*, e.g. Shakespeare, *Per.* 2. 1. 17).

It is rewthe to beholde;
 Now in hote, now in colde,
 Ffull wofull is the housholde
 That wantys a woman.

Bot what ende has thou mayde with the hyrdys,¹ Mak?

Mak. The last worde that thay sayde when I turnyd my bak,
 Thay wold looke that thay hade thare shepe all the pak.
 I hope² thay wyll nott be well payde³ when thay thare shepe lak,
 Perde!

Bot howso the gam⁴ gose,
 To me thay wyll suppose,⁵
 And make a fowll noyse,
 And cry outt apon me.

Bot thou must do as thou hyght.⁶

Gill. I accorde me thertyll.

I shall swedyll⁷ hym right in my credyll;
 If it were a gretter slyght,⁸ yit couthe I help tyll.
 I wyll lyg downe stright,⁹ com hap¹⁰ me.

Mak. I wyll.

Gill. Behynde!

Com Coll and his maroo,¹¹
 Thay wyll nyp us full naroo.

Mak. Bot I may cry out 'Haroo!'
 The shepe if thay fynde.

Gill. Harken ay when thay call — thay will com onone.

Com and make redy all, and syng by thyn oone¹²;

Syng 'lullay' thou shall, for I must grone,
 And cry outt by the wall on Mary and John,
 Ffor sore.¹³

¹ shepherds

² suspect

³ pleased

⁴ sport

⁵ they will suspect me

⁶ promised

⁷ swaddle

⁸ trick

⁹ straightway

¹⁰ wrap, cover

¹¹ companion = Gib (cf. Wordsworth's 'winsome' marrow, *Yarrow Unvisited*)

¹² alone, by thyself

¹³ pain

Syng 'lullay' on fast
When thou heris at the last;
And, bot I play a fals cast,¹
Trust me no more.

SCENE V.

The moors near Horbury. Enter COLL, GIR, and DAW

Draw. A, Coll, goode morne, why slepys thou nott?

Coll. Alas, that ever was I borne! We have a fowll blott—
A fat wedir² have we lorne.

Daw. Mary, Godys forbott⁸!

Gib. Who shuld do us that skorne? That were a fowll spott.

Coll. Som shrewe.

I have soght with my dogys

All Horbery⁴ shrogys,⁵

And, of xv hogys,⁶

Ffond I bot oone ewe.

Daw. Now trow me, if ye will — by Sant Thomas of Kent,⁷
Ayther Mak or Gyll was at that assent.⁸

Coll. Peasse, man, be still ! I sagh when he went.

Thou sklanders hym yll, thou aght to repent

Goode spede.

Gib. Now as ever myght I the,⁹

If I shuld evyn here de,¹⁰

I wold say it were he

That dyd that same dede!

Daw. Go we theder, I rede,¹¹ and ryn¹² on oure feete.

Shall I never etc brede the sothe to¹³ I wee!¹⁴

¹ shrewd trick (on the shepherds)

2 wether

³ God forbid (*lit.* God's prohibition)

⁴ Horbury, four miles

southwest of Wakefield,
in Yorkshire

5 thickets

6 young sheep

7 Thomas à Becket .

§ agreement, concerted action

9 prosper

10 die

11 counsel

¹² Daw is always 'rynning'.

13 till

¹⁴ know; MS. wytt (H. weete)

Coll. Nor drynk in my heede, with hym tyll I mete.

Gib. I wyll rest in no stede tyll that I hym grete,

My brothere.¹

Oone² I will hight :

Tyll I se hym in sight,

Shall I never slepe one nyght

Ther³ I do anothere.

SCENE VI

MAK's cottage. MAK *singing within*, and GILL *groaning*

Daw. Will ye here how thay hak⁴? Oure syre lyst croyne.⁵

Coll. Hard⁶ I never none crak⁷ so clere out of toyne.⁸

Call on hym.

Gib. Mak! Undo youre doore soyne!

Mak. Who is that spak, as it were noyne,⁹

On loft¹⁰?

Who is that, I say?

Daw. Goode felowse, were it day—

Mak. As far as ye may,

Good, spekys soft

Over a seke woman's heede, that is at maylleasse¹¹;

I had lever be dede or she had any dyseasse.¹²

Gill. Go to anothere stede,¹³ I may not well qweasse.¹⁴

Ich¹⁵ fote that ye trede goys thorow my nese¹⁶

So hee.¹⁷

Coll. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,

How fare ye, I say?

Mak. Bot ar ye in this towne¹⁸ to-day?—

Now how fare ye?

¹ = Coll

² one thing

³ where

⁴ jangle

⁵ croon

⁶ heard

⁷ bray, bawl

⁸ tune

⁹ noon

¹⁰ up there

¹¹ distress (OF. *malaise*)

¹² suffering

¹³ place

¹⁴ breathe (*lit.* wheeze)

¹⁵ each

¹⁶ nose

¹⁷ loud

¹⁸ farmstead

As I am true and lele,¹ to God here I pray
That this be the fyrst mele that I shall ete this day.

Coll. Mak, as have I ceyll,² avyse the, I say —
'He lernyd tymely³ to steyll that couth not say nay.'

5 *Gill.* I swelt⁴!

Outt, thefys, fro my wonys⁵!

Ye com to rob us, for the nonys.

Mak. Here ye not how she gronys?

Youre hartys shuld melt.

10 *Gill.* Outt, thefys, fro my barne! Negh⁶ hym not thor⁷!

Mak. Wyst ye how she had farne,⁸ youre hartys wold be sore

Ye do wrang, I you warne, that thus commys before

To a woman that has farne — bot I say no more.

Gill. A, my medyll⁹! —

15 I pray to God so mylde,

If ever I you begyld,

That I ete¹⁰ this chylde

That lygs in this credyll.

Mak. Peasse, woman, for Godys payn,¹¹ and cry not so!

20 Thou spyllys¹² thy bra[y]ne, and makys me full wo.

Gib. I trowe oure shepe be slayn. What finde ye two?

Daw. All wyrk we in vayn, as well may we go.

Bot hatters,¹³

I can fynde no flesh,

25 Hard nor nesh,¹⁴

Salt nor fresh,

Bot two tome¹⁵ platers;

Whik¹⁶ catell bot this, tame nor wylde,

None, as have I blys, as lowde as he smylde.¹⁷

¹ leal

² bliss

³ early

⁴ die

⁵ dwelling

⁶ approach

⁷ there

⁸ fared

⁹ middle, inwards

¹⁰ may eat

¹¹ i.e. on the cross

¹² dost injure

¹³ except clothes (I can find nothing)

¹⁴ soft

¹⁵ empty

¹⁶ quick, live

¹⁷ smelled as strongly as he (the sheep)

Gill. No, so God me blys, and gyf me joy of my chyld!

Coll. We have merkyd¹ amys; I hold us begyld.

Gib. Syr, don²! —

Syr — oure Lady hym save! —

Is youre chyld a knave³?

Mak. Any lord myght hym have,

This chyld, to his son.

When he wakyns he kyppys⁴ that joy is to se.

Daw. In good tyme to hys hyppys,⁵ and in ccle.⁶

Bot who were⁷ his gossyppys,⁸ so sone rede⁹?

Mak. So fare fall thare lyppys¹⁰!

Coll.

Hark now, a le¹¹!

[*Aside.*

Mak. So God thaym thank —

Parkyn, and Gybon Waller, I say,

And gentill John Horne, in good fay;

He made all the garray¹² —

With the greatt shank.

Gib. Mak, freyndys will we be, ffor we ar all oonc.

Mak. We? Now I hald for me,¹³ for mendys¹⁴ gett I none!

Ffare well all thre, all¹⁵ glad were ye gone.

[*The shepherds leave the house.*

Daw. 'Ffare wordys may ther be, bot luf is ther none'

This yere.

Coll. Gaf ye the chyld anythyng?

Gib. I trow not oone farthyng¹⁶!

Daw. Ffast agane will I flyng;

Abyde ye me here.¹⁷

[*Goes back to the house.* 25

Mak, take it to no grefe if I com to thi barne.

Mak. Nay thou dos me greatt represe,¹⁸ and fowll has thou farne.

¹ aimed
² completely

³ boy
⁴ grabs, clutches

⁵ hips; see Gen. 49. 25; Prov. 11. 26

⁶ happiness

⁷ MS. was

⁸ sponsors

⁹ ready

¹⁰ lips

¹¹ lie

¹² commotion

¹³ myself

¹⁴ amends

¹⁵ very

¹⁶ rush, thing

¹⁷ MS. there

¹⁸ reproach

Daw. The child will it not grefe, that lytyll day-starne.¹

Mak, with youre leyfe, let me gyf youre barne

Bot vi pence. [*He approaches the cradle.*]

Mak. Nay, do way, he slepys.

Daw. Me thynk he pepys.²

Mak. When he wakyns, he wepys.

I pray you go hencce. [*COLL and GIB return.*]

Daw. Gyf me lefe hym to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.³

[*He sees the sheep.*]

What the dewill is this? He has a long snowte.

Coll. He is merkyd⁴ amys, we wate ill⁵ abowte.

Gib. 'Ill-spon weft,' iwys, 'ay commys foull owte.'

Ay, so!

He is lyke to oure shepe!

Daw. How, Gyb, may I pepe⁶?

Coll. I trow 'Kynde'⁷ will crepe⁸

Where it may not go.⁹

Gib. This was a qwantt gawde,¹⁰ and a far[c]¹¹ cast;
It was a hee¹² frawde.

Daw. Yee, syrs, wast.¹³

Lett bren¹⁴ this bawde, and bynd hir fast.

'A fals skawde¹⁵ hang[s] at the last.'

So shall thou.

Wyll ye se how thay swedyll¹⁶

His foure feytt in the medyll?

Sagh I never in a credyll

A hornyd lad or¹⁷ now.

Mak. Peasse byd I! What, lett be youre fare!

I am he that hym gatt,¹⁸ and yond woman hym bare.

¹ See 553 22

² whimpers

³ cloth

⁴ fashioned (marked?)

⁵ wait to no purpose

⁶ have a look

⁷ nature

⁸ A proverb; also found in *Everyman*, l. 316

⁹ walk

¹⁰ trick

¹¹ See 538 27

¹² high, deep

¹³ was it

¹⁴ burn

¹⁵ scold

¹⁶ swathe, swaddle

¹⁷ before

¹⁸ begot

Coll. What dewill shall he hatt,¹ Mak? Lo, God, Makys² ayre³!

Gib. Lett be all that, now God gyf hym care,

I sagh.⁴

Gill. A pratty child is he

As sytys on a womans⁵ kne,

A dyllydowne,⁶ pèrde,

To gar⁷ a man laghe.

Daw. I know hym by the eeremarke — that is a good tokyn.

Mak. I tell you, syrs, hark! Hys noyse⁸ was brokyn;

Sythen⁹ told me a clark¹⁰ that he was forspokyn.¹¹

Coll. This is a fals wark. I wold fayn be wrokyn¹²;

Gett wepyn.

Gill. He was takyn with¹³ an elfe,

I saw it myself;

When the klok stroke twelf

Was he forshapyn.¹⁴

Gib. Ye two ar well fest¹⁵ sam¹⁶ in a¹⁷ stede.

*Coll.*¹⁸ Syn thay manteyn thare theft, let do thaym to dede.¹⁹

Mak. If I trespass eft, gyrd of²⁰ my heede;

With you will I be left.²¹

*Daw.*²² Syrs, do my reede:

Ffor this trespass

We will nawther ban²³ ne flyte,²⁴

Ffyght nor chyte,²⁵

Bot have done as tyte,²⁶

And cast hym in canvas.

[*They go outside, and toss MAK in a sheet.*

¹ be called, named

² Mak's

³ heir

⁴ say

⁵ MS. wamans (em. M.)

⁶ darling

⁷ make

⁸ nose

⁹ since

¹⁰ MS. clerk

¹¹ bewitched

¹² avenged

¹³ enchanted by

¹⁴ transformed

¹⁵ endowed

¹⁶ together

¹⁷ one

¹⁸ MS. iiii pastor (em. M.)

¹⁹ death

²⁰ strike off

²¹ you shall judge

²² MS. primus pastor (em. M.)

²³ curse

²⁴ scold

²⁵ chide

²⁶ as quickly as possible

SCENE VII

The fields near Bethlehem of Judea. Enter the Three Shepherds

[*Coll.*¹] Lord, what I am sore, in poynt for to bryst² !
In fayth I may no more ; therfor wyll I ryst.³

Gib. As a shepe of vii skore⁴ he weyd in my fyst.
Ffor to slepe aywhore⁵ me thynk that I lyst.

5 *Daw.* Now, I pray you,
Lyg downe on this grenc.

Coll. On these thefys yit I mene.⁶

Daw. Wherto shuld ye tene⁷ ?

Do⁸ as I say you.

An ANGEL appears, and sings Gloria in excelsis.

*Then the ANGEL addresses the shepherds :*⁹

10 *Angel.* Ryse, hyrdmen heynd¹⁰ ! for now is he borne
That shall take fro the feynd that Adam had lorne¹¹ ;
That warloo¹² to sheynd,¹³ this nyght is he borne.
God is made youre freynd now at this morne,

He behestys.¹⁴

15 At Bedlem go se ;
Ther lygys that fre¹⁵
In a cryb full poorely,

Betwyx two bestys.

[*Exit*

Coll. This was a qwant stevyn¹⁶ as¹⁷ ever yit I hard.
20 It is a mervell to nevyn¹⁸ thus to be skard.¹⁹

Gib. Of Godys Son of hevyn he spak upward.²⁰

All the wod on a levyn²¹ me thoght that he gard²²

Appere.

¹ em. M.

² burst

³ rest

⁴ seven score pounds

⁵ anywhere

⁶ think

⁷ trouble

⁸ MS. so (em. M.)

⁹ MS. Angelus cantat 'Gloria
in excelsis,' postea dicat :

¹⁰ gentle

¹¹ lost

¹² wizard

¹³ destroy

¹⁴ promises

¹⁵ noble one

¹⁶ voice

¹⁷ MS. that (em suggeste
by M.)

¹⁸ name, speak

¹⁹ frightened

²⁰ from above

²¹ lightning

²² made

Daw. He spake of a Barne

In Bedlem, I you warne.

Coll. That betokyns yond starne¹; [Pointing to the sky.

Let us seke hym there.

Gib. Say, what was his song? Hard ye not how he crakt² it,
Thre breves³ to a long?

Daw. Yee, Mary, he hakt⁴ it.

Was no crochett wrong, nor no thyng that lakt it.

Coll. Ffor to syng us emong, right as he knakt it,⁵
I can.

Gib. Let se how ye croyne!

Can ye bark at the mone?

Daw. Hold youre tonges! Have done!

Coll. Hark after, than! [They sing.

Gib. To Bedlem he bad that we shuld gang;

I am full fard⁶ that we tary to lang.

Daw. Be mery and not sad — of myrth is oure sang!

Everlastyng glad⁷ to mede⁸ may we fang,⁹

Withoutt noyse.

Coll. Hy¹⁰ we theder forthy,¹¹

If¹² we be wete and very,

To that Chyld and that lady;

We have it not to lose.

Gib. We fynde by the prophecy — let be youre dyn! —

Of David and Isay, and mo then I myn,¹³

Thay prophecied by clergy¹⁴ that in a vyrgyn

Shuld he lyght and ly, to slokyn¹⁵ oure syn

And slake¹⁶ it,

¹ nom.

² trilled (?); MS. crakyd

³ breves (three breves were accounted equal to one long in the music of that period)

⁴ warbled (?)

⁵ threw it off

⁶ afear'd

⁷ gladness

⁸ for reward

⁹ receive

¹⁰ hie

¹¹ therefore

¹² even if

¹³ remember

¹⁴ learning

¹⁵ quench

¹⁶ slacken, abate

[Save] oure kynde¹ from wo,
Ffor Isay sayd so:

Ecc² virgo

Concipiet³ a chyld that is nakyd.

Daw. Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,
That Lufly to se, that all myghtys may.⁴
Lord, well were me, for ones and for ay,
Myght I knele on my kne, som word for to say
To that Chylde.

Bot the angell sayd
In a cryb was he layde,
He was poorly arayd,
Both meke⁵ and mylde.

Coll. Patryarkes that has bene, and prophetys beforne,
Thay desyryd to have sene⁶ this Chylde that is borne.
Thay ar gone full clene; that have thay lorne.
We shall se hym, I weyn, or it be morne,
To tokyn.⁷

When I se hym and fele,
Then wot I full weyll
It is true as steyll
That prophetys have spokyn:

To so poore as we ar[e] that he wold appere,
Ffyrst fynd, and declare by his messyngere.
Gib. Go we now, let us fare, the place is us nere.
Daw. I am redy and yare,⁸ go we in fere⁹
To that Bright.¹⁰

¹ race

² MS. cite (em. E.)

³ Isa. 7. 14 (Vulgate)

⁴ has power over all mights

⁵ MS. mener (em. K.)

⁶ Matt. 13. 17

⁷ as a sign

⁸ prepared

⁹ together

¹⁰ bright one

Lord, if thi wyll¹ be —
 We ar lewde² all thre —
 Thou grauntt us somkyns³ gle.
 To comforth thi Wight.⁴

SCENE VIII

Bethlehem. A stable. Enter the Shepherds, and kneel

Coll. Hayll, comly and clene! Hayll, yong Child!
 Hayll, Maker, as I meyne, of⁵ a madyn so mylde!
 Thou has waryd,⁶ I weyne, the warlo so wylde;
 The fals gyler⁷ of teyn,⁸ now goys he begylde. —

Lo, he merys,⁹

Lo, he laghys, my Swetyng! —

A wel fare¹⁰ metyng;

I have holden my hetyng.¹¹ —

Have a bob¹² of cherys.

Gib. Hayll, sufferan¹³ Savyoure! Ffor thou has us soght,
 Hayll, frely Foyde¹⁴ and Floure, that all thyng has wroght!
 Hayll, full of favoure, that made all of nought!

Hayll! I kneyll and I cowre. A byrd have I broght

To my Barne.

Hayll, lytyll tyne¹⁵ Mop¹⁶!

Of oure crede thou art Crop.¹⁷

I wold drynk on thy cop,¹⁸

Lytyll Daystarne.¹⁹

Daw. Hayll, Derlyng dere, full of godhede!

I pray the be nere when that I have nede.

¹ MS. wylles

² simple, ignorant

³ of some kind

⁴ creature

⁵ from

⁶ cursed

⁷ beguiler (Satan)

⁸ of sorrow, sorrowful

⁹ grows merry

¹⁰ very fair

¹¹ promise

¹² bunch, cluster

¹³ sovereign

¹⁴ noble child

¹⁵ tiny

¹⁶ baby, young creature

¹⁷ See Heb. 12. 2

¹⁸ from thy cup

¹⁹ See 2 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 22. 16

[Save] oure kynde¹ from wo,

Ffor Isay sayd so:

*Eccc*² *virgo*

*Concipiet*³ a chylde that is nakyd.

Daw. Ffull glad may we be, and abyde that day,

That Lufly to se, that all myghtys may.⁴

Lord, well were me, for ones and for ay,

Myght I knele on my kne, som word for to say

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⁶ Matt. 13. 17

⁷ as a sign

⁸ together

⁹ together
¹⁰ bright one

Hayll, swete is thy chere! My hart wold blede
To se the sytt here in so poore wede,
With no pennys.

Hayll! Put furth thy dall¹!

5 I bryng the bot a ball;
Have and play the² withall,
And go to the tenys.³

Mary. The Fader of heven, God omnypotent,
That sett all on seven,⁴ his Son has he sent.
10 My name couth⁵ he⁶ neven,⁷ and lyght⁸ or he went.
I conceyvyd hym⁹ full even thurgh myght, as he ment,
And now is he borne.

He kepe you fro wo!
I shall pray hym so;
15 Tell furth as ye go,
And myn¹⁰ on this morne.

Coll. Ffarewell, lady, so fare to beholde,
With thy Chylde on thi kne!

Gib. Bot he lygys full cold.

Lord, well is me; now we go, thou behold.

20 *Daw.* Fforsothe, allredy it semys to be told
Full oft.

Coll. What grace we have fun¹¹!

Gib. Com furth, now ar we won¹²!

Daw. To syng ar we bun,¹³

25 Let take on loft.¹⁴

[*They sing*]

*Explicit Pagina Pastorum.*¹⁵

¹ fist, hand

² refl.

³ tennis (well known in England by the end of the fourteenth century)

⁴ created all things in seven days (?)

⁵ did

⁶ God the Father

⁷ name

⁸ alighted, (descended (on mdt.))

⁹ Christ

¹⁰ think

¹¹ found

¹² rescued, saved

¹³ bound

¹⁴ let us sing aloud

¹⁵ Here ends The Shepherd Pageant

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⁹ Christ

¹⁰ think

¹¹ found

¹² rescued, saved

¹³ bound

¹⁴ let us sing aloud

¹⁵ Here ends The Shepherds' Pageant

